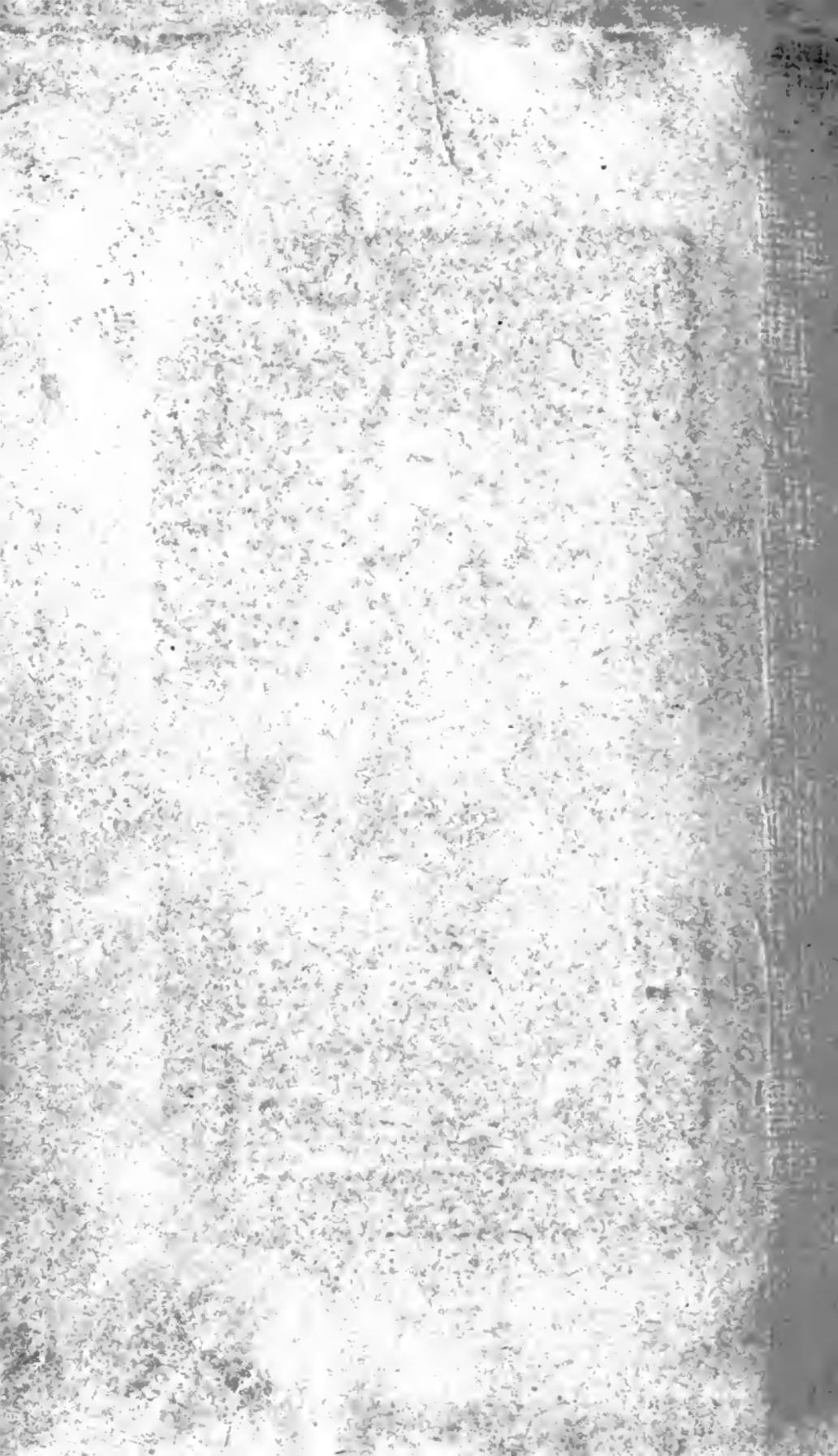


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INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT HEART-WORK ;

AND

A COMPANION FOR PRAYER.



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George the student

Wm. M. Clark

INSTRUCTIONS
ABOUT HEART-WORK,

AND

A COMPANION FOR PRAYER.

BY THE REV. RICHARD ALLEINE,
SOMETIME RECTOR OF BATCOMBE, SOMERSET.

REVISED AND CORRECTED, WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF THE AUTHOR,

BY THE REV. JOHN S. STAMP.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

THE REV. RICHARD ALLEINE.

RICHARD ALLEINE, the author of the work now presented to our readers, was, with his brother William, the son of Richard Alleine, the rector of Dicheat,—a parish in the hundred of Whitestone, in the county of Somerset, about three miles and a half from Castle-Cary,—where the subject of this sketch was born, in the year 1611. He entered as Commoner of St. Alban Hall, Oxford, during the Michaelmas Term of 1627, being at that time about sixteen years of age. After he had taken his degree of Bachelor, he removed to New Inn Hall, in the same University, where he continued until he graduated Master of Arts. His father, who held the living of Dicheat half a century, is represented as having been a pious and successful minister, and greatly beloved by his flock; although he suffered severely from certain intolerant proceedings of his diocesan, the Bishop of Wells. He died full of days and honour, aged eighty. The celebrated Joseph Alleine, author of "An Alarm to the Unconverted," with other popular works, and minister of Taunton, Somersetshire, was a kinsman of Richard; of whom Anthony Wood cynically

observes, that he was "*snapped for a conventicler,*" and imprisoned in Ilchester jail for his nonconformity. Entering holy orders, young Richard assisted his father, and preached frequently in various parts of the county.

Richard Alleine succeeded Richard Bernard to the rectory of Batcombe. The latter had been presented to that living in 1613, "on account of his excellent learning, genuine piety, and ministerial abilities," by Dr. Bisse, who had been minister of the place almost from the commencement of the Reformation. This revered and venerable pastor, it is said, purchased the advowson of Batcombe, to present once only, for which he gave £200; and though he had a son in the ministry, he constantly resolved to bestow it as the Lord should direct him. Therefore, upon the presentation of the benefice, he spoke to Mr. Bernard and others in these words:—"I do this day lay aside nature, respect of profit, flesh and blood, in thus bestowing as I do my living, only in hope of profiting and edifying my people's souls." He died shortly after. This, his last act, he called his *packing penny* between God and himself.*

Mr. Bernard left Richard Alleine a brilliant example of ministerial fidelity and diligence, by which he profited not a little. He is represented as having been "a hard student, a most exemplary Christian, and much addicted to acts of charity; also a judicious, affectionate, and profitable preacher, being filled with zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. His labours in the ministry were bestowed not only on his own congregation, but on some of the adjacent market-towns. Divers painful and profitable labourers in the Lord's vineyard had their first initiation and direction from and under him; to whom also many

* Broöke's History of Puritans, vol. ii. p. 460. London, 1813.

others had recourse, and from whom they borrowed no small light and encouragement. His people, by his constant pains in catechising, as well as by his preaching, were more than ordinary proficient in the knowledge of the things of God; and the *youth* of his congregation were very ready in giving a clear account of their faith, whereof he would often speak with much rejoicing. He died in the month of March, 1641, aged seventy-four years. The historian Fuller has given him a place among the learned writers of Christ's College, Cambridge; and Granger denominates him "the worthy rector of Batcombe." His writings were numerous, and discovered "great precision of thought, and much strength and energy of mind." Mr. Alleine found in this parish a "people prepared for the Lord."

Mr. Alleine, sen., imbibed the prevailing political sentiments of the day, and to the utmost of his power he fostered and encouraged the cause of the Parliament. He found a warm associate in his son; for which, as might be expected, he was frequently interrupted in the exercise of his ministry by the Cavaliers. He subscribed "The testimony of the Ministers of Somersetshire to the truth of Jesus Christ, and to the Solemn League and Covenant;"—a document which, in those troublous times, was considered of immense value, as will appear from the following brief history of it. The English Parliament having desired the assistance of Scotland in the prosecution of the war against the Royalist party, solicited also the aid of some of their divines, with those already gathered together at Westminster, to settle an uniformity of religion and church-government on both sides of the Tweed. The Commissioners who were charged with the execution of these projects, were favourably received by the Assembly in Edinburgh, who proposed, as a preliminary, that the two nations should enter into a perpetual covenant for them-

selves and their posterity, that all things might be done in the house of God according to his will; and having appointed some of their number to consult with the English Commissioners about a proper form, they chose delegates for the Westminster Assembly, and unanimously advised the Convention of States to assist the Parliament in the war. The instructions of the Commissioners sent to the Assembly at Westminster, were to promote the extirpation of Popery, prelacy, heresy, schism, scepticism, and idolatry; and to endeavour to form an union between the two kingdoms in one confession of faith, one form of church-government, and one directory of worship. The Committee for drawing up the Solemn League and Covenant delivered it into the Assembly, where it was read, and highly applauded by the ministers and lay-elders,—none opposing it, except the King's Commissioners; so that it passed both the Assembly and Convention in one day, and was despatched next morning to Westminster, with a letter to the two Houses, wishing that it might be confirmed, and solemnly sworn and subscribed in both kingdoms, as the surest and strictest obligation to make them stand and fall together in the cause of religion and liberty.

A day was appointed for subscribing this Covenant, when, after certain religious services had been performed in St. Margaret's church, Westminster, the House of Commons went up into the chancel, and wrote their names on one roll of parchment, and the Assembly of Divines on another, in both of which the Covenant had been fairly transcribed. On the following Lord's day, it was taken by the House of Lords. It was subsequently ordered by the Committee of States in Scotland to be sworn to, and subscribed, all over that kingdom, on penalty of the confiscation of goods and rents, and such other punishment as His Majesty and the Parliament should inflict on those

who refused. In the spring of the year 1644 it was ordered to be taken throughout England by all persons above the age of eighteen years. British subjects residing abroad were also not exempt from the test. All young ministers were required to take it at their ordination, and none of the laity were continued in any office of trust, either civil or military, who refused. Notwithstanding all this severity, Dr. Calamy informs us, that Mr. Richard Baxter prevented his congregation from subscribing, on the ground that it might be a snare to their consciences; nay, further, he threw obstacles in the way of its being taken in the county in which he lived, except in the city of Worcester,* where he confessedly had not much influence. Mr. Alleine exerted himself with great diligence to secure the subscription in Somerset.

With his father, Mr. Richard Alleine was appointed by the Parliament, an Assistant Commissioner for ejecting scandalous, ignorant, and insufficient ministers from the Church, and also schoolmasters, in the same county.—On this subject a few words of explanation will suffice. The clergy on both sides shared deeply in the calamities of the times, being plundered, harassed, imprisoned, and their livings sequestered as they fell into the hands of the victorious party. Many pious prelates and clergymen suffered greatly, because they could not conscientiously take the Covenant, or comply with the new directory for public worship; among these were Archbishop Ussher, Bishops Merton, Hall, and many others.—It is, however, much to be regretted, that many were utterly unworthy of the station which they occupied. The entrance into the sacred office of the ministry was far too easy. Thou-

* Neal's History of the Puritans, vol. ii., pp. 65—71. 8vo. edit. Parsons, London.

sands who professed to be invested with its hallowed authority, threw off at the period of the Reformation the trammels of Popery, and embraced the doctrines of the Reformers, with a facility as great as that with which they exchanged the surplice for the gown, in the transit from the reading-desk to the pulpit; so that at the distance of upwards of fourscore years from that period, numerous churches fostered clergymen whose lives disgraced their calling, and whose doctrines, if any were conscientiously held, were of such a character as could easily be relinquished for others. This evil, with all its unblushing enormity, stalked abroad at noon-day,—it could not be hid. A large Committee, consisting of the whole House of Commons, was appointed to inquire into the scandalous immoralities of some of the clergy, of which the celebrated Mr. White, M.P. for Southwark, whom Whitlock represents as being “an honest, learned, and faithful servant of the public,” was the chairman. So great a number of petitions were forwarded, crowded with articles of misbehaviour, relating to the superstition, heresy, or immorality of ministers, that the House was obliged to form various Sub-Committees for the more expeditious despatch of business. Another Committee of this description was instituted, “to consider how there may be preaching ministers set up where there are none; how they may be maintained where there is no maintenance, and all other things of that nature; also, to inquire into the true grounds and causes of the great scarcity of preaching ministers, and putting others into their places.” For which purposes the knights of shires, and burgesses of the several corporations, were ordered to bring informations within six weeks, of the state of religion in their respective counties. This Sub-Committee consisted of sixty-one members, together with the knights and burgesses of Northumberland, Wales,

Lancashire, Cumberland, and the burgesses of Canterbury. They had their regular meetings in the Court of Wards; and from the powers above mentioned, were sometimes called, the Committee for Preaching Ministers. They had the inspection of all hospitals and free-schools, and were authorized to consider of the expediency of sending Commissions into the several counties, to examine such clergymen as were accused, who could not with convenience be brought up to London.* To one of these Commissions Richard Alleine was attached,—of whom Anthony Wood, who habitually and systematically condemns every one whose piety and usefulness were conspicuous, says, that in discharging the duties of that inquiry, *he was severe enough.*†

* Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, vol. ii., pp. 49, 50.

† "In order to silence the clamours of the royalists," says Mr. Neal, "and justify the proceedings of these Committees, it was resolved to print the cases of those whom they ejected, and submit their conduct to the public censure.—Mr. Fuller confesses that several of the offences were so foul, that it is a shame to report them, crying to justice for punishment. But then he adds in favour of others, that witnesses against them were seldom examined on oath; that many of the complainers were factious people; that some of the clergy were convicted for delivering doctrines that were disputable, and others only for their loyalty. Bishop Kennet says, that several of them were vicious to a scandal. Mr. Eachard is of the same mind. But Mr. Baxter's testimony is more particular and decisive. He says,—'That in all the countries where he was acquainted, six to one at least, if not many more, that were sequestered by the Committees, were by the oaths of witnesses proved insufficient or scandalous, or especially guilty of drunkenness and swearing. This I know will displease the party, but I am sure that this is true.'" The pamphlet of Mr. White, the chairman, is in my possession, and is entitled, "The first Century of Scandalous, Malignant Priests, made and admitted into Benefices by the Prelates, in whose hands the Ordination of Ministers and Government of the Church hath been. Or, a

On the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne, Richard Alleine was speedily ejected for his nonconformity. After his deprivation he preached as often as opportunity was afforded, but was frequently placed in circumstances of peril, from whence he with difficulty extricated himself. On one occasion he was apprehended at the house of Mr. Moore, a Member of Parliament, in whose mansion Mr. Alleine was several times requested to preach to the family and neighbours. The zealous Member cheerfully paid the fine of *five pounds* on behalf of his minister and friend, but preferred going to prison on account of his own, with which he had been mulcted, for opening his house to the preacher. Mr. Alleine was not unfrequently summoned to the Sessions, where by the local Magistracy he was accustomed to receive bitter and caustic reproofs for "*conventicling*:" he nevertheless escaped incarceration in Ilchester gaol, where his kinsman Joseph Alleine was already.*—This apparent leniency is easily accounted for.

Narrative of the causes for which the Parliament hath ordered the sequestration of the Benefices of several ministers complained of before them, for viciousness of Life, errors in Doctrine, contrary to the Articles of our Religion, and for practising and pressing superstitious innovations against Law, and for malignancy against the Parliament.—It is ordered this seventeenth day of November, 1643, by the Committee of the House of Commons in Parliament concerning Printing, that this book entitled, [The first Century of Scandalous, Malignant Priests, &c.,] be printed by George Miller. (Signed) John White.—London: printed by George Miller, dwelling in the Blackfriars, 1643."

* On the 26th of May, 1663, Joseph Alleine was committed to Ilchester gaol on the charge of causing a riotous and seditious assembly. He was tried on the 24th of August, and though nothing could be proved against him, except that he had sung a psalm and instructed his family in his own house, other persons being present, he was found guilty, sentenced to pay a fine of one hundred marks, and in default of payment he was

His popularity in the neighbourhood was so great, that his persecutors feared to touch his person; his piety and benevolence were so conspicuous and so universally acknowledged, that the authorities, before whom he was from time to time summoned, were aware, that the cause which they had espoused, sufficiently intolerant and tyrannical as it certainly was, would be rendered still more odious and repulsive in the estimation of the public, and also that it would receive a stain, if possible, more deep and indelible than ever, by committing such a man as Richard Alleine to prison.

The Five Mile Act shortly after came into brisk operation. This very obnoxious law, which was worthy the most palmy and flourishing days of Queen Mary, and her myrmidons Bishops Bonner and Stephen Gardiner, enjoined, that no nonconformist ministers shall, after the 24th of March, 1665, unless in passing the road, come or be within five miles of any city, town-corporate, or borough, that sends burgesses to Parliament, or within five miles of any parish, town, or place, wherein they have, since the Act of oblivion, been parson, vicar, or lecturer, &c., or where they have preached in any conventicle, on any pretence whatsoever; before they have taken and subscribed the oath before the Justices of the peace at their Quarter Sessions for the county in open court; upon

sent to prison, where he remained a year within three days. After his release he resumed his former occupations, and on the 10th of July, 1665, he was again imprisoned. These imprisonments, during which he suffered much severe treatment, broke down his health, and he died in the year 1668, at the age of about *thirty-five*. Newton's Sermon at the Funeral of Mr. Joseph Alleine, and an Account of his Life, published by the Revs. George Newton, Richard Alleine, and Richard Fairclough."—Palmer's Nonconformist Memorial, vol. iii., pp. 208—212. 8vo. edit. London.

forfeiture for every such offence of the sum of forty pounds, one third of which was to be awarded to the King, another third to the poor, and a third to him that shall sue for it. It was further enacted, that such as shall refuse the oath aforesaid, shall be incapable of teaching any public or private schools, or of taking any boarders or "*tablers*" to be taught or instructed, under pain of forty pounds, to be distributed as above. Any two Justices of the peace, upon oath made before them of any offence committed against this Act, are empowered to commit the offender to prison for six months, without bail or main-prize. Those ministers who had some little estate and substance of their own, retired to remote and obscure villages, or to such small market-towns as were not corporations, and more than five miles from the places where they had preached.—In many counties it was difficult to find such places of retirement; for either there were no houses untenanted, or, they were annexed to farms which the ejected ministers were not capable of using; or, the people were afraid to admit the ministers into their habitations, lest they should be suspected as favourers of nonconformity. Some miscreants taking advantage of the necessities of their former pastors, actually raised the rent above what was just, and beyond what they could afford to pay. On this account great numbers were buried in comparative obscurity; while others, who had neither money nor friends, continued to preach as opportunity prepared the way, until they were sent to prison: inasmuch as the sufferers thought that it was far more eligible to perish in a gaol, than to starve out of one; especially when by this means they had some occasional relief from their hearers, and a hope also that their wives and children might meet with protection and support after their death. Many who lay concealed in distant places from their flocks in the day-time, rode

thirty or forty miles to preach to them in the night, and retired before the rising of the sun. These privations tempted a few to conform, contrary to their previous and avowed judgment; but the body of nonconformists remained steadfast to their principles, while those who persecuted so bitterly gained neither reputation nor number. The informers were very diligent in hunting after their game: the soldiers behaved with brutal rudeness and violence; so that if the object of their search escaped them, they would rush into the barns and out-houses, and thrust their swords up to the hilt in the hay and straw, supposing that they had concealed themselves in such places. They also suffered "the spoiling of their goods," while their wives and children had to wander from place to place, friendless, terrified, and starved. These methods of cruelty reduced many ministers, with their families, to live upon *brown rye bread* and water; while but a few were compelled to have recourse to public beggary, the providence of God appearing wonderfully for their relief in their greatest extremities.*

When this iniquitous and oppressive law came into operation, Mr. Richard Alleine removed to Frome-Selwood, a market-town and parish of the hundred of Frome, and about twenty-five miles from Ilchester, where he privately held forth the word of life until the day of his death, which event occurred December 22d, 1681, under the roof of Mr. Robert Smith; where, as Anthony Wood says, "he had lived several years, and had kept conventicles." He was buried in the church of that place, about the centre of the middle aisle. Mr. Richard Jenkins, the vicar of the parish, preached a sermon at his funeral, and gave him an excellent character; for which act of fidelity and truthful-

* Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, vol. ii., pp. 536, 537.

ness, Anthony Wood stigmatizes the worthy clergyman with being a lukewarm conformist.*

His writings were numerous, all of which tended to promote a spirit of true piety.—The following is a list of them :—

1. “*Vindiciæ Pietatis; or, a Vindication of Godliness in the greatest strictness and spirituality of it, from the imputations of folly and fancy. Together with several directions for the attaining and maintaining of a Godly life. By R. A. London, 1664.*”—Anthony Wood says that it was printed in 8vo. in 1664, and again in 1669. It was sent into the world without a printer's name, but with a dedication to the inhabitants of Batcombe.

“The Godly Man's Portion,” which was printed in 1663, was generally published with, and as a companion to, this volume. It is therefore conjectured that the first edition of the “*Vindiciæ*” was sent into the world in the year 1663, if not in that which went before. The reason the book is destitute of the typographer's name, &c., is because the usual licence was refused. On its publication the volume was eagerly purchased; so much so, that the King's bookseller, on account of the licence being withheld, and having notice where a large parcel of them was lodged for sale, caused them to be seized; in consequence of which they were sent to the King's kitchen, there to be employed for other purposes than reading. From this place the printer,

* We quote from the *Athenæ*:—“At which time Richard Jenkins, M. of A., (sometime of Gloucester Hall,) a lukewarm conformist and vicar of that place, the same who married Thomas Thynne, of Long-leat, Esq., to Elizabeth, Countess of Ogle, heir to the illustrious family of Percy,—preached his funeral sermon, containing many pathetic *encomiums* of him, having several times before visited him in his sickness.”—Wood's *Athenæ*, vol. ii., col. 690. Folio. Second edit. London, 1721.

more intent about gain than the contents of the volume, redeemed the whole, by paying a small sum of money, as though he were purchasing waste paper: he then caused them to be bound and sold in his own shop! This disgraceful and trickish proceeding having been discovered and complained of, His Majesty's bookseller was compelled to beg pardon upon his knees at the Council table, and to return them to the kitchen to be *bisked*,—that is, to be rubbed over with an inky brush, so as to be illegible. The Rev. John Wesley greatly admired this work, and selected from it his form or "Directions to Penitents and Believers for Renewing their Covenant with God," which is in constant use among the societies of Wesleyan Methodism at the present time.*—An abridged edition of this work also appears in his "Christian Library."†

The following remarkable anecdote concerning this work was related by Mr. John Thomas, the late aged and worthy minister at the Pithay Meeting, in Bristol. He knew a man in Yorkshire, who stole this book from a sale near Colne, in Lancashire, and was converted by reading it. After which, he brought it back to the owner, Mr. T. Sawley, with penitence and with thankfulness to God, who had overruled his theft to the salvation of his soul. Communicated by Dr. Ryland, who received it from Mr. Thomas.‡

2. "The Godly Man's Portion and Sanctuary. Being a second part of 'Vindiciæ Pietatis.' By R. A. London: Printed Anno Domini." This work is generally supposed to have been published in 1663.

* Wesley's Works, vol. ii., pp. 338, 339. Third edit. London, 1829.

† Wesley's Christian Library, vol. xviii., p. 5, *et seq.* 8vo. edit. London, 1824.

‡ Nonconformist's Memorial, vol. iii., p. 168. Second Edition. London, 1803.

3. "Heaven opened; or, a brief and plain Discovery of the Riches of God's Covenant of Grace. Being the third part of 'Vindiciæ Pietatis.' By R. A. London: Printed Anno Domini 1666."

4. "The World Conquered; or, a Believer's Victory over the World laid open in several sermons on 1 John, v. 4. Being the fourth part of 'Vindiciæ Pietatis.' By R. A. London, 1668, 8vo." Another edition was published in 1676. "London: Printed for Peter Parker, at the Leg and Star, in Cornhill, over against the Royal Exchange." All the before-mentioned pieces were collected in one volume. London, 1671, 8vo., and entitled, "The Works of Mr. Richard Alleine, in four parts. Dedicated to the inhabitants of Batcombe."

5. "Godly Fear; or, the Nature and Necessity of Fear, and its Usefulness, both to the driving sinners to Christ, and to the provoking Christians on in a godly life, through the several parts and duties of it till they come to blessedness. By R. A., author of 'Vindiciæ Pietatis.' Heb. xii. 28. 'Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.' 8vo. London: Printed for Samuel Sprint and Brabazon Aylmer, at the Bell, in Little Britain, and at the Three Pigeons, in Cornhill, 1674." This volume consists of sermons, preached on several texts. It was revised by the Rev. John Wesley, and published in his Christian Library.*

6. "A Rebuke to Backsliders, and a Spur to Loiterers, in several sermons lately preached to a private congregation. 8vo. London, 1677." Another edition of this work was published in 1694, with the following title:—"A Rebuke to Backsliders, and a Spur for Loiterers, in several sermons lately preached to a private congregation, and

* Christian Library, vol. xviii., p. 369, *et. seq.* 8vo. edition.

published for the awakening a sleepy age. By R. A., author of 'Vindiciæ Pietatis.' 12mo. London: Printed for Hugh Newman, at the Grasshopper, in the Poultry, 1694." Dr. Kippis says there was an edition in 1684, in which it is stated, for the first time, in the title-page, that it was "published for the awakening a sleepy age." From the préface it appears, that the author, when he composed the work, was in a sickly and declining state of health. This production of Mr. Alleine also fell under the revising hand of Mr. Wesley, and appeared in his Christian Library.*

7. "A Companion for Prayer: or, Directions for Improvement in Grace and practical Godliness in Times of extraordinary Danger. 12mo. London, 1680." A posthumous edition was subsequently published, under the editorial supervision of Dr. Samuel Annesley, and appended to the "Instructions for Heart-work," to which the author's name is prefixed. "By Richard Alleine, author of 'Vindiciæ Pietatis.' London: Printed by J.(ohn) R.(ichardson), for T.(homas) C.(ockerill), 1684."

8. "Instructions about Heart-work; what is to be done on God's part and ours, for the care and keeping of the heart, that we may live in the exercise and growth of grace here, and have a comfortable assurance of glory to eternity. By that eminent gospel minister, Mr. Richard Alleine, author of 'Vindiciæ Pietatis;' with a preface by Dr. Annesley. The second edition. London: Printed by J.(ohn) R.(ichardson), for Thomas Cockerill, at the Three Legs, in the Poultry, 1684." To this edition, Dr. Annesley appended the "Companion for Prayer, &c." The first edition of the "Instructions" was in the possession of Dr. Kippis. It bore the following imprint:—"London:

* Christian Library, vol. xviii., p. 227, *et. seq.* 8vo. edition.

Printed for Jonathan Greenwood, at the Crown, in the Poultry, near Grocer's Alley, 1681."

9. "A Letter to a Friend, to prove that the Ordination by Presbyters is valid, and not to be repeated." This tractate has not hitherto fallen into the hands of

JOHN S. STAMP.

London, September 5th, 1845.

INSTRUCTIONS

ABOUT

Heart-Work.

What is to be done on God's part and ours, for the cure and keeping of the HEART, that we may live in the Exercise and Growth of Grace here, and have a comfortable Assurance of Glory to Eternity.

By that eminent Gospel Minister
Mr. RICHARD ALLEIN, Author of
Vindiciæ Pietatis, with a Preface by Dr. *Annesly*.

To which is added the *Companion for Prayer*, by
the same Author.

The Second Edition.

ZEC. I. 5, 6.

*—The Prophets, do they live for ever? but my words—
did they not take hold of your fathers? &c.*

LONDON,

Printed by J. R. for Thomas Cockeril, at the
Three Legs in the Poultry. MDCCLXXXIV.

THE HISTORY OF THE

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TO THE READER.

THIS was the last Work of this blessed Author, and I wish the improvement of *the scope* of it, may be the *first* and *last* of every reader. That his works have done good, very few have so many heart-epistles of commendation. O let nothing be wanting on your part, but that this may do more good! Were all our swords of contention beaten into plough-shares and pruning-hooks, for ploughing up the fallow ground of the *heart*, for pulling up the weeds, and cutting off the luxuriances of the *heart*;—were it the only contention, who should most promote gracious *heart-work* in themselves and others: it would afford comfort both *living* and *dying*. We are every one more ready to find fault with others than to mend ourselves; but were heart-work more minded, we should have no time for such excursions. This Treatise will instruct you in *downright Christianity*, which if all *heartily* minded who wear the name of *Christian*, we had no occasion to fear what men or devils could do against us. Let me assure you, it is more than a probable opinion, that unless we attend to plain practical godliness, it is *presumption*, and not *faith*, to expect deliverance. God holds us hovering upon our good behaviour; our most infallible prognostications, what God will do with us, are within us. It is not what *we seem*, but what *we are*; God looks at the heart: when the bent and frame of this is right, it cannot

but influence the life ; and when heart and life please God, nothing can come amiss ; God's severest strokes will be *blessings* ; but where the heart is neglected, the providences that are most grateful to flesh and blood, will be *curses*. Christians, you know it is granted on all hands that God looks most at the *heart* ; therefore brutish sinners, when they would evade conviction, boast of their *hearts*, to excuse their ignorance and sottish profaneness : they will tell you, that the heart is good ; and thus the father of lies flatters, and ruins them, with a good conceit of their *hearts* : on the other hand, the most serious Christians are always complaining of their *hearts*, that they are dead, fickle, false, and unspiritual ; thus the father of lies discomferts them, by souring their graces ; while their mortification, humility, holy jealousy, their hatred of sin, and sense of its encroachments, are warped by Satan to their discouragement. A clear and practical understanding of the way of grace, of temptation, and of duty about the heart, will steer us through all the difficulties and dangers we shall meet with on this side of glory. That this book may be blessed to this end, is the hearty desire of a willing servant of Christ and Christians.

SAMUEL ANNESLEY.

INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT HEART-WORK.

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.” (Prov. iv. 23—27.)

IN these words you observe, I. A great office, in which every man is set with respect to himself: he is a keeper. II. The trust, committed to his care and keeping. 1. His heart:—*“Keep thy heart.”* 2. His lips, ver. 24:—*“Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.”* Keep thy mouth and thy lips in order; keep them from speaking frowardness, and from uttering perverse things. 3. His eyes, ver. 25:—*“Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee.”* Keep thine eyes open, look with thine eyes, and keep them from wandering—look right on. 4. His feet, ver. 26, 27:—*“Ponder the path of thy feet, remove thy foot from evil.”* Let thine eye look, and let thy foot walk right on. Let thine eye see the way before thee; and let thy foot walk in it, not turning to the right hand or to the left.

DOCTRINE I. Every man is appointed by the Lord to be his own keeper. Where there is a *depositum*, there is a *custos*: he is a trustee to whom a trust is committed. Here take notice: 1. Every man hath other keepers besides himself. *“The Lord is thy keeper.”* (Psalm cxxi. 5.) Our governors and teachers are keepers: every man is, or

ought to be, his brother's keeper. Magistrates fill the office for the benefit of their country ; ministers for their flocks and congregations ; parents for their children and families. We should have but ill looking to, had we no other keepers than ourselves ; and all others, as magistrates, ministers, and parents, could do little towards the keeping of us, if the Lord were not engaged. "*Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*" (Psalm cxxvii. 1.) Magistrates will but govern, ministers guide, and parents rule in vain, unless the God of Israel be our keeper. O, blessed be the Lord, who, though he hath put the care of us upon ourselves, hath not cast off the care of us himself. Let us bless Him for his care and custody ; and while we take care of ourselves, let us commit the care of ourselves to Him. To both we are exhorted in one word,—"*Commit the keeping of your soul to him, in well-doing.*" (1 Peter iv. 19.) Take all the care you can of yourselves, and your own ways, and then cast yourselves upon the care of God. "*Commit the keeping of your souls to him, as unto a faithful Creator.*" Let us commit the keeping of ourselves to the Lord ; and let us be comforted in this, that the Lord will take us into his custody : then we are in sure hands. He is faithful, and will keep what is thus committed to him. Beware you abuse not this comfort. Dare not say thus,—God will look to me, and therefore I need not look to myself. He that will not keep himself, God will not keep. He that will not take care of his own soul, says in vain, I have committed that care to the Lord. If thou wilt not take care of thine own soul, thou leavest it to the custody of the devil ; and if thou dost, God will leave thee to him also. To say, I commit the keeping of myself to God, and will not take care of myself, is the same, in effect, as to say, I commit my soul to the custody of Satan. If thou take not care of thyself, God will not take care of thee ; and if thou be kept neither by thyself, nor by the Lord, into whose hands art thou like to fall, but into the hands of the devil ? The devil is a keeper, yet not a protector, but a gaoler, the keeper of the prison. All the sinners of the earth are prisoners to this gaoler ; and there is no man that escapes

this keeper, till he will faithfully keep and look to himself, and commit himself to the keeper of Israel.

II. Every man hath others to keep besides himself.—Not only magistrates, who are to keep their people; or ministers, their flocks; or parents, their children; but every man is to look to his brethren. It was the question of a wicked one, and it was a wicked question, “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*” Yes, thou art so: thou art to watch thy brother, and to warn him, to prevent his falling into evil, and to restore and recover him when fallen:—“*If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore,*” &c. (Gal. vi. 1.) Thus every man hath other keepers, and others to keep besides himself:—but,

III. In special, every man is his own keeper. “*Keep thy soul diligently.*” (Deut. iv. 9.) And so in the text, “*Keep thy heart with all diligence.*”

REASON I. If thou wilt not keep thyself, all the world is not able to keep thee.—Ministers will but preach to thee in vain, instruct thee in vain, warn and watch over thee in vain; magistrates will but govern thee in vain; parents will look to thee in vain, if thou wilt not look to thyself. God himself will not keep thee, if thou wilt not keep thyself. Men cannot, and God will not: he will be no keeper of the careless ones.

II. If thou wilt not keep thyself, the devil will be thy keeper.—He will keep thee to thy wickedness; if thou wilt not keep thyself from it. This is every man’s especial charge, to keep himself out of the hands of the devil. The devil will have thee, man, if thou look not to thyself! nay, the devil hath thee already, if thou be careless of thyself. God will keep none but those, that, under him, will keep themselves. Those who will not keep themselves, the devil may come and take them into his custody. The devil goes up and down the world, to see if he can find any sheep without a shepherd; and he that is not his own shepherd, God will be none of his shepherd. If thou wilt not keep thyself, God will not keep thee: thou art a sheep without a shepherd. Here’s a man for me, saith the devil: he hath none to look to him, nor will he look to himself.

This is a man for me, I will be his keeper. He will not keep himself for God, I will keep him for hell. He is none of God's sheep, I will take him for one of my goats. He is left out for me; he hath left out himself, and therefore God hath left him out, and I will take him.

III. If thou wilt not keep thyself, then thou wilt never keep others that are committed to thy keeping.—What a parent, what a neighbour, art thou like to be, who art careless of thyself! How are thy poor children to be watched, how is thy family to be governed, if thou keep not thine own soul? He that will not keep his own vineyard, how will he keep that which belongeth to another? He that neglecteth himself, and his own soul, how will he mind the souls that are committed to him?

USE I. Then no man must be a sleeper, or a loiterer.—Keepers must watch, yea, and work also. He that is set to keep himself, is as the keeper of a garden, or a vineyard; and so it is expressed, "*Mine own vineyard have I not kept.*" (Cant. i. 6.) The garden hath a wall to be kept up, and weeds to be kept under; the vineyard may have wild vines springing up, and exuberant branches that must be pruned and lopped off. Thou hast thy hands full of work, who hast such a vineyard as thyself committed to thy keeping. What, standest thou all day idle! Work in thy vineyard: we live most of us, as if we wanted work, and had nothing to do. We find something to do for this world, and our outward man, and therefore here we are busy; but we see not, we consider not, how much we have to do for our souls, and therefore we are idle, as if we had nothing to do; and those that have the greatest work lying upon them, whose work lies most behind-hand, who have let all within them run to ruin, and lie all out of order,—these are usually the men that live as if they had nothing to do. Thou art a keeper, man;—a keeper of thine own soul and life. Is all in safety? is all in good order? Look into thyself, and see to what a miserable case, for want of good looking to, thou art grown. Conscience, which is thy wall or thy fence, is broken down; the little good that was in thee, thy flowers are withered and

plucked up, and how do weeds abound in thee,—pride and lust and covetousness! And those thorns, the cares of this life, how have they overrun thy ground! And dost thou yet loiter, as one that hath nothing to do? Thou hast work for every day; thou hast work for every hour. The foxes are waiting; the wild beasts (Satan with his temptations) are breaking in; the weeds are growing up every hour: behold, thy case is growing worse and worse; thine eyes more blind, thy heart more hard and senseless daily. Up, and be doing; look to thyself; keep thyself with all diligence, lest thou let all run so far to ruin as to be past recovery!

II. Then every man must give an account of himself.—Whoever hath a trust committed to him, must be brought to a reckoning, how he hath discharged his trust: “*Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*” (Rom. xiv. 12.) God, who now says, “*Keep thine heart,*” look to thyself,—will then say, How hast thou kept thyself? What care or what pains hast thou taken? And O, what account will many of us be able to give! Sinner, thou art a careless, heedless soul; thou takest no thought about thyself; thou takest thought for thy sheep and oxen; thou takest care of thy house, and thy ground; but what thought dost thou take about thyself, thy miserable sick soul, thy blind and dead soul, thy proud and earthly mind, thy envy, thy frowardness, and thy malice and enmity against God and his holiness?—those cursed weeds that have overgrown,—that miserable plight that thy poor soul is in, do sufficiently evidence what a wretched keeper thou hast been of thyself. But, man, what an account dost thou think thou shalt give? Dost thou never think of being brought to a reckoning? Dost thou think that God will for ever let thee alone? Dost thou think that thou shalt never hear of thine idleness, and this carelessness of thyself? Thy parents must give an account how they have done their duty, how they have kept thee whilst under their power; whether they have taught, whether they have governed thee, and educated thee in the Lord; and thou must give the same account how thou keepest, and teachest, and governest thy child. Ministers also

must give an account of thee, how they have instructed thee, warned thee, and watched over thee:—“*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.*” (Heb. xiii. 17.) Think it not much that we deal so plainly and so closely with you; that we are so instant, in exhorting, in reproving, in warning, and watching over you: we must give an account how we discharge our duty towards you. Parents must keep their children, ministers must look to their flocks, and must give an account thereof to God; but besides this, every man must give account of *himself* to God. (Rom. xiv. 12.) How he hath obeyed them that were set over him in the Lord; how far he hath hearkened to their counsels; whether he hath received instructions, and submitted to their exhortations and reproofs; whether their discharge of their work towards him, hath set him faithfully to his own work concerning himself. And, O, what account will you give of yourselves to God? What have many of you done more than others, that have never had Ministers to take care of them? How little have many of you lived, better than those that never have been taught! Sinners, look into your hearts, look upon your lives, and understand, if you have so much understanding in you, in what a miserable case you are to this day. Is it not an awful thing there should be so much ignorance, after so much teaching? Are not those hard hearts, those barren and unsavoury lives, much more those dissolute and wicked lives, that some of you live; that lying, and drunkenness, and sabbath-breaking, and covetousness, that some of you still live in; are not these sufficient evidences, that whatever Ministers have been to thee, thou hast been a wretched keeper of thyself? And what a reckoning must you be brought to for this! Dost not think that God will reckon with thee for all? Reckon with thee for thy lying,—reckon with thee for thy drunkenness,—reckon with thee for all thy carelessness and negligence? What wilt thou say for thyself, when God shall demand of thee, How hast thou kept that vineyard committed to thee? How hast thou kept that soul of thine? How hast thou ordered thy life? How wilt thou

stand speechless in that day, and receive the sentence of an unfaithful steward, and an unprofitable servant!

From ver. 24. "*Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.*" Note two things:—

1. The unruly evil must be ruled. The tongue is an unruly evil. (James iii. 8.) It is one of the hardest works some Christians have, to rule their tongues: yet it must be done.

OBJECT. It is said, it cannot be done: "*the tongue can no man tame.*" What! doth religion put us upon impossibilities, to tame a member which cannot be tamed?

SOL. The meaning is, that no man can tame another's tongue. Thou mayest rule thine own tongue; but if thou wilt not do it thyself, it is more than all the world can do to tame it for thee. Who can stop uncircumcised lips? who can silence the tongue of the froward? Neither laws nor penalties can do it; neither softest nor hardest answers can do it: when the tongue is set on fire, there is no water can quench it: and yet it must be done.

2. That which cannot be ruled, must be put away. "*Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.*" (Prov. iv. 24.) Put away frowardness and perverseness from thee: frowardness cannot be ruled, perverseness cannot be kept in order. When we have done all we can, frowardness will be froward, perverseness will be perverse; and therefore that is the way to rule the tongue, to put away that frowardness which will not be ruled.

1. What frowardness is.—I need not say much to answer that: most men know it too well in their own experience of the froward among whom they dwell, or have to deal withal. There are few men but know what frowardness is, unless it be those that are froward: the eye that sees others, can seldom see itself. He that is of a froward mouth, is hardly brought to understand that he is froward. He that hath a froward wife, she that hath a froward husband, they that have a froward neighbour, need not be told what frowardness is: but he that hath a froward heart, he it is that hath most needs to be told it.

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i. He is froward that is hard to be pleased, apt to be provoked, that is ever finding fault, who is like tinder, apt to catch fire by every spark, and that fire is quickly kindled, but with difficulty quenched: no arguments, no patience, no forbearance will do; but there it burns, and will not be quenched. "*Anger resteth in the bosom of fools.*" (Eccles. vii. 9.) Of these froward fools we are speaking. Frowardness is folly. That fire which is intended as a revenge upon others, doth burn, and vex, and fret out their own hearts.

ii. He is of froward mouth, that gives utterance by his lips to the frowardness of his heart, in virulent, bitter, and provoking language.

II. The necessity of putting it away.—1. The Lord commands us to put away froward mouths. What if thy friend or thy neighbour cannot pacify or silence thee, shall not God pacify thee? If thou wilt not hear man pleading for peace and quiet, wilt thou not hear the Most High? God commands thee to be silent, He commands thee to hold thy peace, and to utter not a word more of thy furious folly: what a perverse spirit are those of, on whom the authority of the Almighty will not prevail! What dost thou say in effect, but, I will speak my mind whether God like it or not?

2. It is a sign, whilst it prevails, that thy religion is vain: "*If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*" (James i. 26.)

(1.) There are some professors whose religion is but an outside and pretence: they do but *seem to be religious*; they *seem* so to themselves, and *seem* so to others; but they are deceived, there is no such thing as religion in them. (2.) Some seem to be religious, but "*bridle not their tongues:*" they pretend to be of circumcised hearts, but are of uncircumcised lips. (3.) The unbridled state of their tongues is an evidence that their religion is vain. When is religion vain? Why, when it cannot answer its end, when it cannot save the soul; and surely that religion which cannot bridle the tongue, cannot save the soul. Man, in what a case art thou? Thou professest religion, and hopest for salvation; but if thou art of an un-

bridled, froward tongue, thy religion is vain, it cannot save thee.

3. Frowardness hinders the exercise of that little religion that such men have : it puts them away from prayer, or reading, or meditation, or exercising one serious thought upon eternity : all religion is thrust behind the door when the froward are up.

Friends, pray do not make light of this grievous evil ; turn every one of your eyes homeward, and reflect upon your own spirit and carriage ; do not say, I am not guilty, or, I am not much guilty this way : it may be it is for want of observing thyself. Look again, and again, how thou carriest it at such a time, how to such or such persons ; and you that are guilty, do not make light of it, do not count it a little fault. Is that but a small evil which proves thee an hypocrite ? Where this evil reigns, and is not checked nor controlled, is not mourned over, and where thou neither art ashamed of it, nor wilt resist it ; it is a sign thou art but an hypocrite, and thy religion is in vain.

Christians, our Lord Jesus, whose disciples we profess to be, and to learn of him, was "*meek and lowly in heart ;*" (Matt. xi. 29;) but art thou his disciple, who art of a proud and furious spirit ? The apostle tells us, that a meek and quiet spirit is an ornament to the gospel, and of great price in the sight of God. (1 Peter iii. 4.) If meekness be an ornament, then frowardness is a blot and a blemish, and a stain upon our profession. If meekness be precious, then frowardness is odious in the sight of God. Wouldst thou make thyself a disgrace to the gospel, an odium and an abomination unto the Lord ? If thou wouldst not, then cease from thy frowardness, study and follow after that gentleness, that sweetness, and candour, and meekness of heart and behaviour, which are so grateful both to God and men.

Friends, though I would not say much, yet finding it lie in my way, I would not pass by this evil without saying something, though but thus briefly to it. But though I have said but little, yet let not this little be forgotten,

especially by any among you, whose conscience may tell you, God hath sent this word as an item to me.

DOCTRINE from ver. 26. "*Ponder the path of thy feet.*"— There are two paths, in one of which every one is walking. There is the good path, or way; and there is the evil path. These two are distinguished by their end, or term to which they lead: that is, the good path leads to good, and is called "*the path of life;*" (Psalm xvi. 11;) and the evil path leads to evil, "*the way of death and destruction.*" (Matt. vii. 13.)

2. By their adjuncts or qualities. The good way, in general, is the way of holiness: in particular, it is the way of humility, meekness, temperance, patience, &c.; the way of faith, and love, and prayer. The evil way is the path of sin in general; and, in particular, it is either that of lying, or covetousness, or pride, or envy, &c. The good way is made up of all these good qualities, or else it cannot be the good way; but any one of the evil qualities will make the way evil. He that is humble, and is not temperate; he that is temperate, and is not patient; he that is patient, and is not merciful; he whose life is not led in universal holiness, that hath any one grace wanting, is not in the good way: one fly spoils the whole box. Christians must "*stand complete in all the will of God.*" (Col. iv. 12.) But for the evil way, he that walks in any one particular branch of it, his way is evil. He that is not a liar, if he be a swearer; he that is not a swearer, if he be a drunkard; he that is not a drunkard, if he be covetous; he that is none of all these, if he be carnal, and walk after the flesh, or any one particular lust thereof, he is in the evil way, the path of sin: if it be but one sin, that is our path, or our way wherein we allow ourselves to walk: the path of sin is the way of death. Now every one in the world hath his path: it is either in the good way, the way of holiness; or the evil way, the way of sin. Of those that are in the way of sin, some are in the way of the proud, others in the way of the scornful, others in the way of lying, others in the way of covetousness: every one hath his way.

DOCTRINE III. Every path must be pondered.—1. To ponder our ways, is to weigh and consider them; the same which is charged, “*Consider your ways;*” (Hag. i. 5;) spend some deep and serious thoughts upon them. Now there is,

(1.) A consideration of the way in which we have hitherto gone. A bethinking ourselves, a reviewing our course: this is that which the Psalmist did,—“*I thought on my ways,*” (Psalm cxix. 59,) that I had hitherto been walking in. I thought and repented of what I had done; I thought and turned. And this is that for which Israel was reprov'd. No man said, “*What have I done?*” (Jer. vii. 6.) No man said in his heart, no man thought with himself, What have I done?

The subject of these thoughts should be,

i. The things that we have done, the particular actions of our lives.—Carnal men never observe or mark what they do: they never review, or reflect upon, their deeds. How many words do men speak, how many works are they engaged in, that they never observe, or mark, or bestow one thought upon: they cannot remember their ways, because they do not observe them. Think what you have been doing all your life long; think what you have neglected to do, and think what you have done, and are doing this day: let your eye be upon the particular actions of your lives.

ii. The quality of our ways,—whether they be good or evil, whether they be holy or sinful.—Thy way hath been the way of lying, the way of covetousness, the way of pride; a carnal, careless, fleshly way. Think with thyself, Is this a good way, or an evil way? Do these my ways please God, or, are they contrary to God?

iii. The end of our ways, or whither they tend, and to what issue they will arrive at last?—Is this my way to God? Is this the way of the everlasting kingdom? Is this the path of life? Have I been all this while in the strait and narrow way that leads to life, or have I been hitherto travelling in the broad way that leads to destruction? This worldly way, this fleshly way, it is, that hath pleased me at present; but whither will it bring me at last?

Sinners, bethink yourselves thus, Whither is it that I am going? What is like to be the end of the course I am taking? Either to God, or the devil? either to heaven, or to hell? Every one of you has been going to one of these: and which of the two have you been making towards? Is lying the way to God? Is drunkenness, and carnal mirth, and pleasure, the way to heaven? Is hardness of heart your way? Is impenitence in your sin, the way to blessedness? Do not your own souls tell you, I must turn out of these evil paths, I must take a new course, ere I can be saved?

Be wise to exercise some such thoughts as these. This is the sinners' great folly, and their great misery, that they run on in their ways, and we cannot persuade them to think whither they are going. But, what, is it of so little weight with you whether you are saved or damned, that it is not worth a few serious thoughts? Surely you could never go on at that senseless rate you do, if you thought whither you were going! We come and preach Christ, and righteousness, and holiness unto you, as the only way of life. You have been often told that Christ is "*the way, and that no man cometh to the Father, but by him;*" (John xiv. 6;) that there is no coming to God but by Christ, or to heaven but by Christ: there must be a coming to Christ, a joining yourselves to him as his disciples and followers. "*Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out;*" (John xxxvii;) but will bring him to life. You have been often told that "*without holiness, no man shall see the Lord;*" (Heb. xii. 14;) that this way of faith in Christ, and that of holiness, is the only way of life: this hath been told you, hath been preached to you over and over again: and yet we cannot persuade you into this way. The reason is, you will not consider what we preach; you will not consider what it is to be damned, and to perish for ever; you will not consider whether you can think of any other way by which it is possible to escape damnation, but this way of faith and holiness. If you did consider, and understood what a hell it is whither your neglect of Christ, and running on in your ways, is leading you; how hot that furnace is into which you are like to fall within a few days; how dreadful it will be when you

are in once, and shall feel the scorching of those flames : what, think you, would not such scalding and burning thoughts make you weary of your sins, and willing to receive Christ ? Would they not awaken you, would they not affright you out of this secure and vain course in which you are now going ?

Where do you think your fellow-swearers, and fellow-drunkards, and fellow-worldlings, who have been cut off in their sins, and carried away into the other world in their impenitence ;—that were laughing with you, and mocking and scoffing with you, a few years ago ;—where do you think they are now ? What do you think they are doing at this hour ? O, it would make an heart of stone tremble and quake, to think what your companions who died in sin now see and feel ! Think with thyself man,—Those that awhile ago were drinking with me, and laughing with me, and making a mock of Christ and of sin as I do ; where are they now ? It would make thine eyes stare, and thine hair stand on end, and thy bones shiver, to think where they are. “ *Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver* ” you, (Psalm l. 22,) from that place of the dead, of pitch, and burning brimstone, where you have reason to fear your companions in sin are at this hour. Whilst Christ is preaching to you, and God is warning you to flee from the wrath to come, how are they tearing their hair, and biting their tongues, and wringing their hands, while considering that the preaching of Christ to them shall be no more ; that all their warnings are over, and they must for ever feel, and faint and perish under, that wrath which is now too late for them to escape. Bestow some thoughts upon your companions that are dead and gone ; and then consider yourself, whether, if you keep on in the way in which you are walking, you must not shortly be with them in the same condemnation : and if you will not consider it presently, “ *in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.* ” (Jer. xxiii. 20.) Therefore, again I say to you, and charge you from the Lord, consider your *present* evil ways, and to what a fearful end they will certainly bring you, if you speedily turn not out of them.

(2.) Considering the ways that are before us, in which we should for the future go.—God hath given sinners their choice, to continue as they are in the same way, or to take up a new and better way. Think what you have done, and how you have lived, and what you have to do for the future: “*let thine eyes look straight on,*” &c. What course do you think it is best for you to take? Dost thou think it is best to continue as at present, to hold on your worldliness, your drunkenness, your lying, your carnal, careless course? or is it not best to hearken to Christ, and turn from your sins, and betake yourself to a serious, godly, and holy life? Which of the two is best? May be, it never came into your thoughts to put the question to yourself; but you have run on from one day to another, without asking, What were I best to do? Why, now here is that I would persuade you to:—to look before you, and consider what is best for you from henceforth to resolve upon. What would a wise man do in this case? what choice would such an one make? Sure, methinks, a little consideration should bring you to this,—If I be wise, I should turn from my wonted ways: I shall be a fool and a madman if I go on thus. What, doth God offer to pardon my neglect of Christ, my neglect of my soul, and all my sins, if I will yet but turn to him? What, doth Christ yet offer to bring me to God, and to save me from the eternal dungeon, if I will yet come unto him, and become a new creature? What, will my going on as I have hitherto done, my spending the remainder of my life as I have spent that which is past, in sin and vanity, will this be running upon my own death, and shutting up the door of mercy for ever against me: and shall I continue as I am? Is there a way of life before me, a door of mercy open to me; and shall I not get into the way, and be making towards the door? Consider, sinners, what is the best, the wisest, and the only safe course to take from henceforth, and do accordingly.

2. Why must we ponder our paths?—(1.) God pondereth them: “*Thou dost weigh the path of the just.*” (Isa. xxvi. 7.) (2.) The devil pondereth them, “*that he may sift you as wheat.*” (Luke xxii. 31.) (3.) Wicked men, our enemies,

ponder them. (4.) Our way may be right in our own eyes, for want of consideration ; when yet upon consideration it may appear to be the way of death. "*There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*" (Prov. xiv. 12.)

i. There is a way of some men that is not so much as right in their own eyes ; who, as little as they consider it, see their way to be the way of death, and not of life ; the way of the openly profane, the way of the drunkard and adulterer, the way of the swearer and blasphemer. Profaneness doth not pretend to be the way of life. Drunkards and adulterers know they are out of the way ; their consciences tell them it is not the way of God, that it is not the way to heaven : this monitor tells them, I must turn, I must repent, and take up a better way ere I die : I must not die a drunkard, I must not die a blasphemer, or a scoffer ; I must repent, or I am lost : they entertain a hope that they shall repent, and this hope hardens them. The consideration that such men should take up, is not to convince them that they are out of this way of life,—that they know already,—but to convince them of the necessity of a present turning and changing their way. Darest thou not die a drunkard, or a libertine, or a licentious liver ? how then darest thou live so a day longer ? Art thou sure but that death may meet thee before thy turning-day come ? And how, if it should ? Thou knowest that then there is no hope of thee : everlasting wrath must be thy portion. Thou countest upon turning and repenting : but consider what is the reason thou dost not repent at present, that thou dost not this day give a divorce to all thy wickedness, shake hands with all thy companions, and forthwith become a new man. Why not now ? O, I cannot bring mine heart to it. And dost thou, in good earnest, think that it will be easier hereafter ? Hath the Lord been persuading thee to a change all thy life long,—and thou seest his word cannot prevail, thou seest it affects thee not after all thy convictions, and fears, and threatenings of the word, and checks of thy conscience ! Hitherto thou goest on : thy lust is too hard for thy conscience, or convictions : and dost thou think in thy heart that this is the way to make it easy to repent, to

continue longer in thy sin? A course of sin hardens thee, sinner! Thine heart is not so hardened against repentance this year, but look for it, thou art like to find it harder the next. The farther thou goest on in sin, the farther off art thou from repentance.

ii. There are others, whose ways are right in their own eyes, which consideration would make appear to be the way of death, and not of life. I shall instance two sorts.

(i.) The way of moral unbelievers.—These are they that are sober, temperate, and harmless, and just in their dealings with men, and courteous, and good natured: this is their way, and this way seems right unto them: in this way they hope to reach heaven, though, whatever they have of morality, they have nothing of Christianity in them. Conversion or regeneration is as strange to them, as it was to Nicodemus, who, when Christ told him, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,*” (John iii. 3,) answered, “*How can these things be?*” They have need to ask, as Pilate, What is truth? so they, What is this new birth? What is this new creature? What is this conversion? Consider, man, what dost thou think of this plea at last, when this is all thou canst say, I am an honest man; but, God help me, no good Christian: I am no drunkard, but yet an unbeliever: I am no liar nor swearer, but yet no convert to Christ! Consider those scriptures, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;*” (John iii. 3,) and, “*Except ye be converted, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*” (Matt. xviii. 3.) And dost thou bless thyself in thy harmless and less vicious way, when thou hast never felt any such thing as regeneration upon thee? This thy way is thy folly, and though it be right in thine own eyes, it is, and thou wilt find it to be, the way of death!

(ii.) The way of hypocritical professors.—Some hypocrites know themselves to be such, and the way seems not right to them: others are hypocrites, and yet take themselves to be sincere, and the deceit of their hearts may be so deep, that there is need of deep consideration to discover it. They pray, and hear, and have some face of religion upon their ways; they will speak of God, and the things of

God with affection, and live in the visible communion of the church, with good approbation; they are, it may be, well reputed, and well reported among men; yet for all that, the root of the matter may not be in them: they may be unsound and rotten at heart, and neither themselves know it, nor others suspect it; there may be some secret reigning lust in their hearts; they may be lovers of the world, "*lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God.*" (2 Tim. iii. 4.) Whatever they have, there may be "*one thing lacking,*" as was the case with the young man, (Mark x. 21,) whose life was commendable in many things; yet, says Christ, "*One thing thou lackest,*" and that one lack was the loss of heaven. Have we not all need to consider ourselves, and to inquire how it is with us? A sincere Christian is an entire Christian. "*Blessed are the undefiled,*" (Psalm cxix. 1,) that is, the entire, in their way; that labour to be entire, lacking nothing: and sure we had need consider whether we are so, or no.

Some professors are so lame and halting in their way, that they lack many things, almost all things, of serious Christianity. Thou hast the profession of godliness, but is not the power of it lacking? Thou doest some of the works of righteousness, but may not the Lord complain of thee, as of Sardis,—"*I have not found thy works perfect?*" (Rev. iii. 2.) Thou doest some of the works of a Christian, but are not the inward graces wanting? Some of the inward graces thou seemest to have, but art thou not deficient in others? Thou seemest to have faith, but is not love lacking? Art thou not a malicious, revengeful, quarrelsome professor? Thou seemest to have love, but is not humility lacking? Art thou not proud, and haughty, and high minded? Thou seemest to be humble, but is not meekness lacking? Art thou not fierce, froward, and peevish in thy way? Thou seemest to be meek, but is not patience lacking? How canst thou bear affliction? Dost thou not murmur and repine, and vex thyself in the day of adversity? Thou seemest all this: but art thou true in thy sayings, righteous and exact in thy dealings, merciful, compassionate, and bountiful to those that are in necessity? Thou seemest to have all these inward

graces ; but is not a bold profession of Christ lacking ? Thou art bold to own Christ, and hear his word, even to come in hazard ; but whatever thou canst say of thy hearing, is not prayer lacking ? If thou pray in secret, is not prayer in thy family lacking ? If thou pray in thy family, is not secret prayer lacking ? If prayer be both in secret, and in thy family, is not family-instruction, the teaching thy family, the care of their souls, lacking ? If there be some care of others in thee, is not the communing with thine own heart lacking ? Is not self-examination lacking ? Dost thou search thy heart, and try thy ways, as thou oughtest ? Dost thou make a diligent search, a narrow search, in fear lest thou shouldst be mistaken ? If there be self-converse, and self-acquaintance, dost thou maintain intercourse with God ? Is not holy meditation lacking ? How often dost thou look heaven-ward ? What time dost thou spend daily in serious meditation of God, and the things above ? If there be such acts exercised, the actings of faith, the actings of love, the actings of holy prayer, the actings of holy meditation, what life is there in these actings ? Are they not all as dead things, sacrifices without a heart, images without a life ? If thou thinkest there be the presence of every grace, a will to every duty, an enmity against every sin, what power is there accompanying these ? What power in duty, what power against sin ? Doth not the corruption of thy heart bear down the grace thou thinkest thou hast, and carry thee down the stream of an evil and vain life ? If there be some goodwill to a godly life, is not the power lacking ?

It is true, the best of Christians have much that is wanting in degree : their faith is weak, their love imperfect, —but is there nothing lacking of the essential parts of a Christian ? Thou not only lackest strength of faith, but it may be thou lackest faith itself ; thou not only lackest strong love, but thou lackest love. A child, though he hath not the understanding of a man, or strength of a man, may be a true child ; but if he want the soul of a man, or the head or heart of a man, he is a monster, and no human child. Is not the soul or the life of Christianity, the head and heart of a Christian, the life of a

Christian, lacking? If so, thou art but a monster, and no Christian. Is there not the conscience of a Christian lacking in thee? Is not thy Christian covenant lame and imperfect? Hast thou covenanted universally for all the parts of Christianity, for every duty, against every sin, without any reserve of the least liberty from thy duty to any sin? Is thy conversation entire according to thy covenant? Is there nothing allowedly lacking in thy conversation of all that thou hast covenanted with the Lord? Or, whatever thou doest, is there not life and soul, and heart, lacking in all thou doest? Thou prayest, but dost thou not pray without a heart? Thou hearest, but dost thou not hear without a soul? Thou seemest to be a follower of Christ, and livest in the practice of his precepts, but is there not life lacking in all thy duties?

O consider these particulars, how many things are lacking in you.—1. Consider, and fear, lest when you come to be weighed in the balance, any of you should be found wanting; lest when you come to die, and expect an entrance into the everlasting kingdom, Christ should say to you, No, you cannot come in; one thing is lacking, one thing that is necessary to thy entrance. One thing lacking of the essence of a Christian, all would be lost, thy soul lost, the everlasting kingdom lost. Consider therefore and fear.

2. Consider, be humbled, and be ashamed, that after all the time you have had, and all the helps and means you have had afforded, and all the tenders and offers the Lord hath made to supply your lack,—be humbled and be ashamed, that yet there is so much lacking, and all this for want of a heart to accept and improve what have been offered. Let us be humbled and ashamed, friends, that if we have anything of the faith of God's elect in us, we are yet so weak in the faith; that if we have anything of the love of Christ in us, our love is so cold and imperfect; that if we are found walking in the way of the Lord, it is so slowly, and so haltingly. This is our shame, and matter of great humiliation, that we have no more grace, that we live no better lives. But what shall I say to you, that want not only the strength of faith, the zeal of love, a more

even, steady, and fruitful life, but want faith and love, and are not yet come into the ways of the Lord. I say to you, as I said before, fear and tremble : think what it will be, to be found thus in the day of the Lord. But to you that have faith, and have no more,—that do in some degree live by faith, and yet live no better,—consider also, and be ashamed ; consider, and be confounded in yourselves ; consider, and be humbled under all your wants and haltings.

3. Consider, and make up what is lacking. Get those poor weak souls strengthened ; pray the Apostles' prayer, "*that the Lord would grant unto you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ; that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.*" (Eph. iii. 16—19.) Get those poor weak souls strengthened, and those halting and barren lives established, and filled with the fruits of righteousness. Take the counsel of the Apostle,—"*Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness charity : for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (2 Pet. i. 5—8.)

Brethren, whilst heedless and inconsiderate people are upon the losing, consider how you may be upon the gaining hand ; whilst they are decreasing, be you for abounding : let there be an adding daily to you : be not satisfied with the graces you have, with the duties you perform ; but let your eye be upon increasing daily your store. Whilst others add sin to sin, guilt to guilt, let it be in your hearts to add grace to grace, fruit to fruit. Consider what is lacking in you, and follow after a supply ; follow after it by earnest desires, by diligent labour and endeavours, and by incessant and importunate prayer unto the God of all grace, that he would cause all grace to abound towards you, and in you, that, having sufficiency in all things, you may abound to every good work.

Brethren, it will be a mercy if these words may produce

such fruit in you, as to set your heart upon getting and adding daily to your grace, and good fruits, and then considering how you may most effectually improve it. I pray receive the exhortation in the name of the Lord; I beseech you forget it not; ponder your paths, consider what is lacking,—what is lacking within, to set your outward man going,—what is lacking without, in your goings, that needs supply. Consider what you would have God do more for you, than he has yet done; consider what you would do more for God than you have heretofore done; in what particulars you fail, and wherein you would be specially helped forward. Consider and desire, desire and labour, labour and pray that the Lord would fill up what is wanting; and then I shall be bold to assure you, in the words of the Apostle, "*My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ, to whom be praise for ever.*" (Phil. iv. 19.) Amen.

DOCTRINE. The great care that lies upon every man in the world, is to keep his heart.—There are many cares that lie daily upon us. We have our estates, and our names, and our families, and our bodies to take care of; but our great care must be of the heart.

I. What is meant by the heart.—This is sometimes taken for the principal part of the body, and sometimes for the soul of man; so, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;*" (Jer. xvii. 9;) that is, the soul is deceitful: and sometimes for the will and affections of the soul; so, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9,—here it is taken for the whole soul; and this command, "*Keep thy heart,*" is the same with that in Deut. iv. 9,—"*Keep thy soul diligently.*"

What is the soul? Most men know not what, and none of us know perfectly what it is. It is our inward and invisible substance, which gives life to our bodies; it is an essential, and the most excellent part of us, that hath most of the nature and image of God in it. It is our immortal part, that hath life in it, and gives life to the body, and never dies. Our reason and will, whereby we differ from brutes,—these are the essential

faculties of our souls. The soul is that in which our capacity lies, of the highest blessedness, and the extremity of misery. The blessedness of the soul is the highest blessedness. The body, as such, is capable of no greater happiness than a beast,—only the pleasures of sense: the soul is capable of spiritual and eternal pleasures; the torments of the soul are most exquisite and intolerable; the burning of the body is nothing in comparison of the wrath of God burning in the soul.

The excellency of the soul above the body, you may guess at, by considering what the body is when the soul is departed. What a ghastly thing, what an offensive and rotten carcase, doth the most beautiful body become when it is dead, and the soul is departed! It was this, the soul of man, that was the great prize that Christ had in his eye, when he died to redeem us. He died to redeem souls, especially to recover that blessed immortality which our souls had lost: the natural immortality they had not lost. That is a great part of our misery, that sin left us immortal creatures, such of whose misery there shall never be an end. It was not our natural immortality, that Christ died to recover; that was not lost, but our blessed immortality. This invisible, immortal, most excellent, part of man, his soul,—this is it which we are to understand by the term “heart,” “*Keep thy heart,*” that is, *Keep thy soul.*

II. What is it to keep the heart?

1. There is somewhat that is supposed in the keeping of our souls; and that is, the recovering them out of their lost state.—The devil hath the keeping of sinners’ souls, whilst they are sinners; and the first work they are to do in order to the keeping their souls, is to get them out of the devil’s hands. “*That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil.*” (2 Tim. ii. 26.)

Here I shall show you three things:

- (1.) The souls of all men naturally are lost.
 - (2.) Men’s souls are not so lost here, but that they are recoverable.
 - (3.) This must be man’s first care, to recover their lost souls.
- (1.) The souls of all men naturally are lost.—It may be

said of every sinner, as the father of the prodigal said of him, "*This my son was lost.*" (Luke xv. 32.) Fathers, you may say of every child you have, whilst they are in their natural state, This my son is lost; this my child is a lost child: yea, and you may say the same of yourselves, whilst in your sins, Mine own soul is a lost soul; and whether you will say it or no, we must say to every one of you, fathers and children, that are yet in your sins, you are lost souls. As Christ came himself, so he hath sent us in his name, "*to seek and to save that which was lost.*" (Luke xix. 10.) What is it to be lost? Why, to be damned persons, signifies to be lost; and to be lost, in this spiritual sense, is to be damned: so that word, "*If the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost,*" (2 Cor. iv. 3,) to them, that be damned; that is, in a state of damnation, and in the way to actual and everlasting damnation. O tremble, sinners; tremble, all you that are yet in your sins! What will you tremble at, if not at being damned? The word calls every man of you, that are not in Christ, reprobates from God. "*Know you not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*" (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) Is Christ in thee? Art thou a convert to Christ? No? Then thou art a reprobate from God; thou art a damned, lost soul: live and die in the state thou art in at present, and thou art eternally lost. What mean you, sinners, that you are so much at ease, so much at rest in your state of sin? Is it nothing to be damned? Is it nothing to be reprobate? O think what it will be, to be found reprobate at the day of judgment, and then to have the sentence of reprobation pronounced upon you! Why, sure, sinners, the very next misery to that, is to be in a state of reprobation. O take this home to you, as your portion from the Lord; every unconverted one, take this word home to you; take it into your mouths. O what shall I do? I am a lost child, I am a lost soul; woe is me! I am undone, a son of perdition, and an heir of damnation. What is it to me, that I have kept my body in good case,—that I am in health? What is it to me, that I have kept my estate, and have not been such a prodigal of that, I have my house, and my lands, and my money? What is it

that I have kept my credit, and my friends? O my soul, my poor soul, is lost; and what good shall my estate, or my credit, or my friends, or my life, do to me?

(2.) Men's souls are not so lost here, but that they are recoverable.—In a little time, if they look not to it, they will be past recovery for ever. Yet a little while, and the Gospel will be a sealed book to you, never again to be opened; yet a little while, and the door of mercy and grace will be shut against you, never again to be unlocked. When death hath once sealed up sinners' eyes,—when the grave hath shut her mouth upon them,—then to every one of you that is found in his sins, the Gospel is sealed up, the door of mercy is shut up, and thou wilt be lost for ever, irrecoverably lost. But yet, sinners, these lost souls may be recovered. There is great hazard at present, that thou mayest not be recovered; but yet there is hope.

i. There is great hazard at present that thou mayest not be recovered.—Do not make light of the hazard; that is, do not make sure: say not such a word, "I doubt not but by the grace of God I shall have mercy, and be saved." There is great hazard that the soul of thine, which is a lost soul this day, may be lost for ever, and never be converted and saved. How great that hazard is, I have formerly told you out of the pulpit, and now you may read the same things from the press, namely, in my discourse on Prov. xxviii. 14: read that book carefully once, especially from page 171 to page 198, where you may understand how great hazard there is, that lost souls may not be recovered.

ii. Yet there is hope thou mayest be recovered. For,

(i.) Your souls are yet every one of them, within the reach of the blood of Christ. You are come to "*the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*" (Heb. xii. 24.) There is not one sinner among you, but at present the blood of Christ speaks for you; and what doth it speak? "Father, if this sinner turn and repent, let him not be rejected; let him be pardoned and saved." For believers, it speaks thus: "Father, these my friends have believed, and have repented; and therefore, I pray thee, let them not fail of having the benefit of my blood: let them not fail of their pardon and salvation." Thus for

saints, and even for every unconverted sinner, it speaks conditionally, *ut supra*, if they will believe, "If they will yet turn, let them also have the benefit of my blood." Hitherto every one of you are thus far within the reach of the blood of Christ; it pleads thus with the Father for you, and if you will come in, will make an atonement for, and redeem and recover you from all your sins.

When once death hath closed your eyes, in your unconverted state, you are gone for ever out of the reach of the blood of Christ: it can then no longer profit you, nor plead for you. There is not one drop of that precious blood shall ever fall into the pit: nothing of the blood of Christ shall come into hell, and find you out there; it is only the guilt of his blood, that shall fall upon sinners in hell,—the guilt of despising his blood, the guilt of trampling on his blood. This is all that shall be said to sinners there, in the pit, "These are they that would none of me: I would have washed them in my blood, but they would not be washed; I would have saved them by my blood, but they would not be saved; I called upon them to turn from their sins, and come unto me, but they would not turn, they would not come; I offered to purge them from their sins, to pardon and make reconciliation for their iniquities, but they would not be pardoned nor purged; they loved their sins, and hardened their hearts, and threw back my blood in my face, they would none of me: and now let the guilt of my blood be upon them, to heighten their flames, and burn in their bowels for ever." The guilt of his blood shall reach to hell, but the expiation and atonement of his blood shall never come there. After death there is nothing but hell, and out of hell there is no recovery: those sons of perdition are lost for ever.

O thank God, sinner, that thou art not yet fallen in thither! thank God that that soul of thine is not in hell! How many younger sinners than thou are there already, roaring under a sense of their madness, in neglecting Christ and his redemption! O thank God, that thou art here; thank God that thou art yet alive; that Christ yet calls thee to come to him; that Christ yet offers thee, that if thou wilt but turn and repent, his blood shall cleanse

thee from all unrighteousness, and save thee from coming into condemnation.

Sinner, there is yet hope of thee, that thou mayest be saved; though there be hazard, great hazard, that thou wilt yet harden thy heart to thy destruction; that thou wilt never be converted, and be saved: there is great hazard that though thou be yet out of hell, thou wilt be there shortly; though thou art yet within the reach of the blood of Christ, thou wilt in a little time be without its reach: but though there be such great hazard that thou mayest die for ever, and be irrecoverably lost, yet there is at present hope concerning thee, that thou mayest be recovered; and there is this hope concerning thee, that thou art yet within the reach of the blood of Christ. O, thank God for it, and do not go on to harden thy heart till thou art past recovery. I say again, thank God that thou art here; but yet I must add, thank God and repent; thank God and be converted, or else it were even as good that thou wast in hell this hour, as to be here in thy sins: nay, it were better for thee that that body of thine were now rotting in the grave, and that soul of thine were now roaring in hell. This would be better for thee than to be here hearing the Gospel; if after all thou shouldst live and die unconverted, and so go to hell at last! These very warnings that now thou hast, if they should not work upon thee to turn thee from thy sins, and bring thee to Christ; if the Gospel should leave thee in the case thou art this day, thou wilt to hell as sure as if thou wast there already; and then all that thou now hearest, or shalt ever hear whilst thou livest, will but heat thy furnace seven times the hotter against thou comest down. But because there is yet hope thou mayest be converted, thank God thou art here: for there is hope, as from this first ground, because thou art within the reach of the blood of Christ; so,

(ii.) There is hope from this, that sinners are yet under the ministry of reconciliation. As the Apostle said, "*To us is committed the word of reconciliation,*" (2 Cor. v. 19,) so we may say to sinners, To you it is given to hear the word of reconciliation: it is for your sakes that this word of reconciliation is committed to us, that we might preach it

Reconciled to God

unto you. God hath not only continued you within the reach of the blood of Christ, but under the teachings of his ministers, whose work it is to tell you how you may have the benefit of his blood; to make a tender and offer of this blood of Christ to you, and to persuade and make you willing to accept it. We are sent to preach Christ unto you, and to make known unto you, what help there is in Christ for you; and what freedom you have given you to lay hold on Christ; and also to persuade and bring you into Christ, that you may have the benefit of his blood. It is a strange word we have given us, "*Compel them to come in.*" (Luke xiv. 23.) Go and call poor sinners to me; and if they be not willing to come, compel them in: not, force them in, whether they will or no,—Christ will not have any sinner against his will,—but "*compel them,*" that is, use all the importunity you can, to make their unwilling souls willing; use such arguments, if it be possible, that they may not be able to resist; and though they do resist, yet do not give them over so, but do your best by your importunity to overcome such resistance.

Go, says Christ to his servants, fetch all the sinners in the country to me: here is room for them all; many are come already, yet there is room for more. Let my "*house be filled with guests,*" (ver. 22,) filled with converts; go find out these poor wretches where they lie rotting and perishing in their sins, and bring them in. Christ doth not say to his ministers concerning sinners, as once he did to his disciples concerning little children, "*Suffer little children to come to me:*" (Matt. xix. 14:) Suffer poor sinners to come to me, do not put them back, or discourage them when they would come: but, Persuade them in, help them in, press them to come in, beseech them to come and be reconciled to God: I am not willing that any of them should perish, but that all should be brought to repentance, and obtain everlasting life. (2 Peter iii. 9.) This is the business of our ministry; and this ministry of reconciliation, thou, poor sinner, art under this day.

Now does not all this give sinners hope, that they may yet be recovered? Why hath God let thee live to hear

this word? Why hath God brought thee hither this day to hear it? What, canst thou not say, I hope it is that I may be converted; I hope it is that I may be recovered? The Lord yet comes among you to tell you what you must do to be saved; what you must do to get Christ to be yours; to preach repentance to you, that you may "*recover yourselves out of the snare of the devil, who are held captive by him at his will.*" (2 Tim. ii. 26.)

Sinners, you are all prisoners and captives; but yet you are prisoners of hope! You are dead souls, but there is hope you may be made alive; you are lost souls, but there is hope you may be found. There is hazard that you may be quickly irrecoverably lost, but some hope there is you may be recovered. Will you come to Christ? will you come to the means of grace, *as men of hope*? Hear the word, in hope that it may work savingly upon you; pray for such a work, in hope that God may hear: though all the sinners among you, in one sense, are men of hope, yet in another sense the most of them are men of no hope. In this sense you are all men of hope,—there is a door of hope yet open to you; but in this sense you are men of no hope, that is, if you continue as you are,—there is no hope but you must perish. A wild and groundless hope too many sinners have,—they hope against hope; they hope for recovery, without using the means of recovery; they hope for salvation, without reconciliation; they hope for remission, without repentance; they hope to be redeemed from death, without being redeemed from iniquity: this is to hope against hope, this is to hope for that of which there is no hope. There is no hope of salvation without repentance, no hope of escaping without returning. Ministers of the gospel are to break down such false and deceitful hopes, not to build them up.

That which, from what hath been said, I would persuade you to, is to hope for salvation, and in that hope to look after conversion; to hope for conversion, and in that hope, to hear the converting word; to hope for a new heart and life, and in that hope to pray that God will give you this new heart. Dare not to sleep in hope, to sin in hope, to harden yourselves in your sins, in hope of for-

giveness; pray in hope, hear in hope, humble yourselves in hope, turn in hope, that God will accept and be merciful to you. When you come to hear, do not come as most sinners do, not knowing or considering wherefore they come together. But when thou goest to hear and to pray, go with this hope in thine heart,—I am going to hear the word of faith, the word of repentance; and I hope God will bless it to me, that it may work faith and repentance in me: I am going to hear the heart-breaking, and the heart-humbling word, the converting word; and I hope the Lord will humble, and break, and convert me by it. I have often heard, and have been never the better: hitherto I have not been humbled and broken by it: this wretched heart is as dead and as hard as if it had never been preached to. Well, but doth the Lord yet again call me forth to hear this word? O, I will go in hope, that yet at last it may work upon me!

Hope hath two things in it,—desire and expectation. This is the hope in which I would persuade you to come to the word,—to come with desire to be wrought upon, and expecting and looking for such a gracious work. We may say concerning this first coming of Christ into the heart, as is said concerning his coming to judgment,—“*To them that look for him shall he appear without sin unto salvation.*” (Heb. ix. 28.) So to those that look for him, shall he appear to their sanctification. Look to meet with Christ this day in his word; look for Christ coming down to meet you this day; desire that he would, pray that he would, and expect and look for his coming, and appearing to you. This is the hope, wherein I would exhort you to attend on the means of grace,—with desires and expectations of the gracious success of them upon you. If you would thus come to hear in hope, it would much encourage us to preach in hope to you, and to pray in hope for you.

Well, to conclude this: let every sinner of you know, that while the word of reconciliation is continued to be preached to you, so long there is hope concerning you, that you may be recovered. There is hazard, great hazard, a great doubt whether you may be saved, a great fear that

many of you may never be converted and saved; but though there be hazard, yet there is hope.

(3.) The great care that lies upon every sinner in the world, should be, that he get recovered out of his lost state. *“Instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”* (2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.)

Here observe, i. That lost sinners are in the hands of the devil; taken captive by, and held in the snares of, the devil.—That is a lost soldier, that is fallen into the hands of his enemies: that is a lost sheep, that is fallen into the paw of the wolf: that is a lost soul, that is fallen into the snares of the devil; and in those hands is every lost soul. How art thou so secure, sinner, how so merry, how so much at ease? Dost thou know where thou art? Thou art in the hands of the devil: that soul of thine is taken captive by the devil, and lies bound in his snares: the devil hath taken thee, and the devil hath bound thee that thou canst not get loose. O, it were well if sinners understood their case, and in whose hands they lie! There is not one of all the sinners among you, but the devil hath him in custody. Whithersoever thou goest, the devil goes with thee, to watch thee, that thou mayest not escape him. If thou goest to read, the devil goes with thee; to thy Bible, to hinder it from working upon thee; if thou goest to pray, the devil goes with thee, to hinder thy praying; and now thou comest hither to hear, the devil comes to church with thee, to harden thy heart against the word!

Thou dost not see the devil here; and thou dost not think he is here; but thou mayest know by the effect, that he hath been here with thee every day, and at every sermon; thou mayest know it by this, that the devil hath been here with thee, that the word hath prospered no more with thee, to the rescuing thee from his snares: and he that hath been here, is now come again; and he is now watching thee, that thou hearken not to the recovering word.

The devil is the author of all sin. He is the author of all the evil that is in the world. He is the author of all the misery that is in the world. He is the author of all the sorrow that is in the world. He is the author of all the death that is in the world. He is the author of all the damnation that is in the world. He is the author of all the hell that is in the world. He is the author of all the fire that is in the world. He is the author of all the smoke that is in the world. He is the author of all the stench that is in the world. He is the author of all the noise that is in the world. He is the author of all the confusion that is in the world. He is the author of all the darkness that is in the world. He is the author of all the blindness that is in the world. He is the author of all the deafness that is in the world. He is the author of all the dumbness that is in the world. He is the author of all the lameness that is in the world. He is the author of all the blindness that is in the world. He is the author of all the deafness that is in the world. He is the author of all the dumbness that is in the world. He is the author of all the lameness that is in the world. He is the author of all the blindness that is in the world. He is the author of all the deafness that is in the world. He is the author of all the dumbness that is in the world. He is the author of all the lameness that is in the world.

ii. That lost sinners oppose themselves against their own recovery. "*Instructing those that oppose themselves;*" that is, that resist the word of grace, that deafen their ears, and harden their hearts against it: "*Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.*" (Acts vii. 51.) The word of God comes, and the Spirit of God comes, to convert sinners; but they resist their own mercy. The enmity that is in their hearts opposes itself against the word and Spirit. "*How often would I have gathered you, and ye would not!*" (Matt. xxiii. 37.)

iii. The end of preaching the Gospel to sinners, is, to recover their lost souls. "*Instructing them, &c., that they may recover themselves out of the snares of the devil.*"—"*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.*" (Acts xxvi. 18.) We are sent as Christ was, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening the prison to them that are bound; and not merely to preach open the prison-doors, but to persuade the prisoners to come out of prison. "*That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth.*" (Isa. xlix. 9.) God hath sent us with this word to you, that are imprisoned under Satan,—Come forth, poor prisoners! come forth out of prison! Sinners, give no better entertainment to us, than if our word to them were, Come into prison, come into bondage. They take that word, Come into Christ,—as if it were the same with, Come into prison! come into bondage! That Christianity which we persuade sinners to, they look upon as mere bondage: but whatever sinners think, our business is, to persuade them out of the house of bondage. Come, shake off your chains, knock off your fetters, break that yoke of the devil which is upon your neck, get you loose from those sins and those lusts wherewith the devil hath held you, and come unto Christ? It is no bondage to be a Christian. Christ's servants are all freemen: you are all bond-men, already "*in the bond of iniquity.*" (Acts viii. 23.) But who among you would be set at liberty? What do you mean, sinners, will ye die bondmen? We may say concerning you, as Christ concerning the woman, "*whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years.*" (Luke xiii. 16.) You are

the men whom Satan hath bound, not only these eighteen years, but some of you, these thirty-eight years; nay, some it may be these sixty years, or more. Have you been bound, so long bound by the devil, and are you not willing to be set free? Will you go prisoners to the grave? From this upper prison, shall the devil carry you down into the eternal prison? O sinners, that is our business from God to you, to persuade you to make an escape, and to be recovered, out of the snares of the devil.

iv. Sinners' recovery begins in their repentance. "*If God give them repentance, that they may recover.*"—They are only the penitent, that are recovered souls. As long as thou art an impenitent sinner, thou art a lost soul. "*Lest they should be converted, and I should heal them.*" (Acts xxviii. 27.) A converted sinner is an healed, a recovered sinner.

v. It is God that recovers lost souls. "*If peradventure God may give them repentance, that they may be recovered.*"—It is the devil that takes sinners captive, but it is God that rescues the prey from his teeth. It is the devil that leads men to sin, and holds them under sin; but it is God that gives them repentance. Is thine heart hardened in thy sin? Is thy heart hardened against repentance? Canst thou not turn? Canst thou not repent? Go to God, poor sinner: it is he that must give thee repentance. Go to Christ: it is he that God hath exalted, and set up on purpose, that he may give repentance and remission of sins. (Acts v. 31.) Ministers are to preach repentance, but they cannot give repentance: every one of us must say, it is not ours to give. We can tell you to whose door you must go for repentance; we can tell you in what way you are to go to God for it; and we would persuade you to God: but when we have said all we can, it is he alone that can give repentance to you, and work it in you.

vi. Whatever God does to the recovery of lost souls, there is something lies upon themselves to do towards it. "*That they may recover THEMSELVES.*"—Not that they may be recovered, but may recover themselves. Now here I shall show you more particularly,

(i.) What the recovery of lost souls means, or wherein it stands. (ii.) What sinners may do towards their own recovery. (iii.) How men may know whether they are recovered, or no.

(i.) What the recovery of lost souls means, or wherein it stands.—Now it stands, *i.* In their coming to themselves. *ii.* In their coming to God.

i. In their coming to themselves, and recovering their senses and understanding.—The first step of the prodigal's recovery that we read of, was this, "he came to himself:" "*When he came to himself, he said,*" &c. (Luke xv. 17.) He was besides himself before. Sinners are besides themselves: they have lost their wits, and the free use of their reason: they are so drunken in sensuality, that like drunken men, or mad men, they have lost their understanding. Therefore the prophet exhorts those foolish idolaters that worshipped stocks, the gods of their own making, "*Remember this, and show yourselves men.*" (Isa. xlvi. 8.) What, are you so brutish as to think those to be gods, which are made with hands? Where is your reason? Show yourselves men, and no longer such brutes. Sinners recovering from their sins are as Nebuchadnezzar returning from among the beasts. Then said he, "*Mine understanding returned unto me.*" (Dan. iv. 34.) When the prodigal came to himself, we find him presently reasoning with himself:—"How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger?" What do I here? Why dwell I among these strangers? I see I am like to starve for want: in my father's house there is bread enough: were I not better to go to my father? I will arise, and go to him.

Sinners, whilst they are besotted with lust and sensuality, cannot reason thus: their senses have drowned their understanding. If they had but their understanding, and their wit about them, they might reason thus with themselves:—What a miserable case is this I live in? This poor soul of mine is ready to starve and die. I live amongst swine, and I am fit for no better company, whilst I am thus, for I am even as one of the swine: and if I live like a beast, I am sure to die like a beast. Is there no way

for recovery out of this brutish state? May not this mad soul of mine be recovered into his wits again? I have lived a mad life hitherto, else I should never have fed upon husks, these pleasures of sin,—whilst bread, the bread of God, might be had. I have not the understanding of a man in me, or sure I should get me out of this miserable estate.

Sinners, who hath bewitched you? What is it that hath so unmanned you, that, neglecting and running away from God, you should run thus after the devil, and live among his herd of swine, and feed upon trash and dross? The best of your sinful pleasures are no other, and no better. You have your feeding among the swine, and your lodging with them, wallowing with them in the mud and mire. You may know what your feeding is, by the starveling case your souls are in; and we may see what your lodging is, by the filth and mire that is upon you. Behold the mud and abomination cleaving to thee! thy filthy lusts, and vile affections, and spiritual uncleannesses, wherewith thou art polluted! When wilt thou come to thyself, sinner, and bethink of returning from the husks to bread, from thy trough to the table, from the sty of swine to thy Father's house? Is it not better to be a servant of God, than a drudge to the devil? Is it not better to belong to God's holy ones, than to the devil's bemired and mudded ones? Is it not better to return into favour with God, than to live in exile and banishment from God? Dost thou not think, that those who love God, and fear God, and walk with God; that those who know Christ, and are washed with his blood, and walk in his steps, and have laid hold on his righteousness, and shall be partakers of his salvation; dost thou not think in thy heart, that these saints are in better case than thou? Is it as well with thee now, thou art such an ignorant, sensual, swinish, carnal, stupid soul; is it as well with thee now, as if thou wert changed into the image, and made partaker of the holiness, and entitled to the salvation of God? Dost thou bless thyself that thou art none such? Is it well for thee that thou art no believer, or sincere convert to God? When wilt thou come to thy-

self? Show yourselves men, sinners: let your understanding once more return into you. You will never come to be Christians, till you come to yourselves. Show yourselves men, and that you have the understanding of a man in you; recover your reason, and then make use of your reason, and fall a reasoning with yourselves:—What shall I do? Shall I continue as I am? a drunkard as I am, a worldling as I am, a sensualist as I am, a servant of my flesh, and of the devil, as I am? Or shall I arise, and go to my Father? Which do I really judge to be better for me: to go on as I have done, or to make out after a sudden and saving change? To go on after my cups and my companions, after my pleasures and my worldly profits, or to return to the Lord? Hast thou recovered so much of thy reason, as to judge it better for thee to turn and to become a new man? Hast thou so? Then from a man of reason, become a man of resolution. Judge what is best, and choose what is best. "*Then shall she say, I will go, and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.*" (Hosea ii. 7.) Sinner, wilt thou take up such a resolution? Wilt thou take up such words?—Well, I see now what I have been doing all my life hitherto; I see to what a sad pass my foolish and carnal ways have brought me; I see the poverty and the misery, and the straits, and the dangers, that by running away from God, by running after this world and the lusts thereof, I have run myself into. Well, I have done with this vain and foolish life: I will go and return unto the Lord, and then it will be better with me than now.

ii. The next step to this recovery is, coming to God: the first is, coming to yourselves, and the use and exercise of your reason and understanding. And who among poor sinners shall these words preach into your right senses? You have been foolish, senseless souls: is there any of you that are yet come to yourselves? Do you judge it better for you to come back from your vain ways, and to come about to the Lord? Is this voice heard in your hearts?—O, if I could break off from my sins, and become a real convert to Christ, then would it be better with me than now. It would be a happy change, this day

would be a happy day, this sermon would be to me a happy sermon, if the Lord would bless it so to me, as to bring me off from my sins, and bring me to himself! O how wonderfully better would it be for me than it is now!

If any of you are come so far to yourselves as to judge and say, It would be better for me,—let me go on with you, and ask farther,—What will you resolve upon? Will you say, with the prodigal, Well, “*I will arise and go to my Father.*” It is better for me so to do, and I will do it: through the help of God, I will return. Now for repentance; now for religion and righteousness; now for a new heart, and a new life: I have done with my old heart. Satan, I have done with my old life; sin and vanity, I have done with: henceforth, through the grace of God, I will be for God and godliness.

Do you say so? Are you resolved so? Come on but one step further. If you say the word, come on, and do likewise. The prodigal, when he said, “I will go to my father,” arose and went accordingly. Be not like the son in the parable, who said, “I go, Sir,” but went not; but say, and do. Come and join yourselves to the Lord; come into his house; come into his ways; give yourselves to him for his servants, and go and serve him: then will your souls be recovered; then shall it be said to you, as concerning him, These my children were dead, and are alive, “*were lost and are found;*” and we should say over you, as the father did, “*It is meet we should make merry;*” that this day should be a glad day, a joyful day; it is meet that we should rejoice; for this our brother is recovered, he was dead and is alive. O let the Lord God thus rejoice over you; O let all his saints rejoice with you! Come, sinner, make a joyful day of it; come unto the Lord, come to your Father, and he will be ready to meet you, and with open heart and open arms would receive and embrace you.

(ii.) What men may do to recover.—They cannot recover themselves of themselves: it is God that must do it, but they may and must do something towards it.

i. Men can pray for their recovery.—Even carnal men may pray, and though there be no full promise that God will hear, yet God hath both required them to pray, and

hath appointed this as a means of their recovery. The Apostle bids Simon Magus pray that "*the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.*" (Acts viii. 22.) It is a hopeful sign that God has a purpose to give grace, when he sets sinners praying for grace: at least, if they cannot pray themselves, they can speak to others that can, and desire them to pray for them. This Simon Magus did: he begged the Apostles to pray for him. O what a wretched case are those in, that will neither pray for themselves, nor so much as beg Christians to pray for them! Sinner, when didst thou ever do such a thing? When didst thou ever go, either to a Minister, or a Christian, with such a word in thy mouth,—Pray for me? It may be, when thou hast been sick, thou hast sent to the congregation to pray for thy bodily recovery; but when didst thou send or speak to them to pray for thy soul's recovery? Is not thy soul more precious than thy body? Is not thy soul more desperately sick, than ever thy body hath been? Is not prayer for sick souls as needful, and as much prevailing, as prayer for sick bodies? And yet, how many bills have we sent in, to pray for recovery from bodily diseases, to one sent in to pray for the conversion of a soul? But whether thou do it or not, this thou canst not deny,—that thou canst do this towards thy conversion,—thou canst pray for it, and desire others to pray for thee.

ii. Men can hear the word.—This is another means of recovery. "*Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live.*" (Isa. lv. 3.) And this means they can use. The same feet that will carry them to an ale-house, can as well carry them to church; the same ear that can hear a song, or foolish and idle talk, can hear a sermon. Thou wilt say, This I do, and yet am not recovered. Therefore,

iii. Men can give heed to what they hear.—They can mark and observe what the word speaks: "*Take heed how you hear.*" (Luke viii. 18.) Give heed to what you hear, and do not sleep under the sound of the word, or sit heedlessly or carelessly, without minding what the Lord speaks. Herein is the great neglect,—sinners will come to a sermon, but mind as little what is preached to

them, as those that never come at all. This is a wretched neglect, and the common case of many hearers: "*Hearing they hear, and do not understand.*" (Matt. xiii. 13.) Our words would not have such poor success, if people would mind more the things that we speak. O sinners, bethink yourselves, how often have you been here, and not heeded one word that hath been spoken!

iv. Men can think.—What is easier than thoughts? We say, Good words are cheap; but good thoughts are cheaper than good words: the exercise of the thoughts is noted as the first step to repentance. "*If they shall bethink themselves, and repent;*" (1 Kings viii. 47;) and so, "*I thought on my ways, and turned,*" &c. (Psalm cxix. 59.) Thou saidst thou canst not recover thyself. But canst thou not bethink thyself, what a case thou art in? Thou hearest some time from the ministry of the word, that thou art a lost man, a lost soul; but when thou hearest it preached to thee, canst thou not think upon it? Thou dost not think upon it, it is too true, no longer than the word is a speaking; nay, it may be, not so long. What thoughts have you had of it, since you were told, that naturally you are lost, and what a miserable case it is to be a lost soul? Have you since thought as follows:—Woe is me, I am a lost soul: O what a poor wretch am I while my soul is lost! You have been told how these lost souls may be recovered; but what thought hath there been in thine heart since, about taking the course for thy recovery? Thou *dost* not think of these things, it is true; but *canst* thou not think of them? Thou knowest thou canst.

v. Men can stop, and make a stand in their evil ways, from going on farther in them, from making their condition worse than it is, and their recovery more difficult. Canst thou not lay thine hand upon thy mouth, when thou art about to lie, or to swear, or to scoff, and bite in those evil words that are coming out? Canst thou not keep thyself from thy companions, and thine old drunkenness and riot? Canst thou not keep thee out of the ale-house or the tavern? Thou canst do it: such outward acts are in the power of thy will to restrain. Men may be true if

they will, and sober if they will : if thou wilt be a drunkard, or a swearer, or a liar, who can help thee ? But if thou wilt, thou mayest help thyself. It is true thy case is miserable enough, and thy cure hard enough, by thy continuing in thine evil way hitherto : but as bad as it is with thee, it is growing worse and worse : every sin thou goest on to commit, is a new gash, wherewith thou givest a deeper and more deadly wound to thy poor perishing soul. If thou stop thy course, that is something towards a recovery. Well, these things thou canst do towards thine own recovery :—thou canst pray, thou canst hear, thou canst give heed to what thou hearest, thou canst think, and thou canst stop and make a stand in thy evil ways. And if thou wilt but do what thou canst, thou mayest have hope that God will do that for thee which thou canst not.

(iii.) How we may ascertain whether we are recovered or no.—This I shall show,

i. Negatively.

First. Those whose understanding is not recovered, their souls are not recovered ; those whose understanding is still lost, their souls are lost ; those that are not come to themselves, are not come to Christ. Every ignorant soul is a lost soul. "*If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.*" (2 Cor. iv. 3.) From whom is the Gospel hid ? From those "*whom the God of this world hath blinded their minds, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine unto them.*" (See ver. 4.) Art thou an ignorant soul, ignorant of the Gospel ? Does not the light of the glorious Gospel shine into thee ? that is, dost thou not understand the Gospel ? So long is the Gospel hid from thee ; and if the Gospel still be hid from thee, thou art a lost soul.

What multitudes are there, to whom the Gospel is preached, that yet understand nothing of it ! Thou hast been a hearer of the Gospel these many years, but what dost thou understand of it ! As Philip said to the Eunuch, "*Understandest thou what thou readest ?*" (Acts viii. 30 ;) so it may be said to thee, Understandest thou what thou hearest ? No, thou dost not understand : though the light

shines round about thee, yet not a ray of it hath shined into thy heart. It is all dark within thee, whatever light be shining round about thee. Though the light hath shined into thy darkness, yet thy darkness comprehendeth it not. (John i. 5.) Poor ignorant ones, in what a case are you! you are every one of you lost souls! And what is like to become of you? We bring the light among you, but we cannot open your eyes; we preach Christ to you, we instruct you in the knowledge of God, we cry unto you, Get knowledge, seek understanding, seek for it as silver, search for it as for hid treasures. But say what we can, you will not be persuaded, you will not receive instruction: the God of this world hath blinded your minds, and we cannot heal your blindness. There be some of you that know you are ignorant, and will confess it, (not to bemoan yourselves, but to excuse yourselves,) —I am but ignorant, I am not book-learned. What, not learned in the book of God! What, not acquainted with the book of life! No, God help me, I am not. What then? Why, therefore I hope it is not so bad with me, as with others that know. I hope God will forgive me because I am ignorant. This is a wretched principle that has entered the hearts of the ignorant, that because they are so, God will not be extreme to mark what is done amiss by them. O tremble in pleading your ignorance! —you therein confess that which will prove you to be lost souls. You may as well say, I am a damned soul, as say, I am an ignorant soul!

Second. Those whose consciences are lost.—Who, though they may be recovered to be men of understanding, yet are not so far recovered as to be men of conscience. “*We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.*” (Heb. xiii. 18.) Thus it is with recovered souls, they are men of a good conscience. Where conscience is laid waste, the soul still lies open to the government and dominion of the devil. Conscience is a bar and a bulwark against his assaults and temptations. Where conscience is not, the soul is as a city that hath neither gates nor bars, but is left open to the devil, in which to rule at his pleasure. God hath not recovered the rule of

any soul, till conscience be awakened and hath recovered its authority.

Art thou an unconscionable man or woman? Dost thou make no conscience of thy ways? Hast thou slighted conscience, hast thou wounded conscience so long, that now it lets thee alone to thy will, and thy lust? Or, if it checks thee sometimes, for thy evils, yet thou bearest it down, and goest on thy way against its reproofs and contradictions? Art thou a man of no conscience? Is it not against thy conscience to lie, or to defraud, or to drink to drunkenness, to live without praying or minding God or thy soul? Does conscience let thee alone to live thus? Or, if it doth smite thee, yet goest thou still on against it? Art thou a man of no more conscience than this? What dost thou think of thyself? Whatever thou thinkest, thou art a lost soul: while conscience is lost, thy soul is lost. Till conscience be recovered, thy soul is not recovered: and conscience is never recovered, till it hath recovered its authority, and hath gotten the rule and the government of thee.

Third. Those who make light of their disease and their misery.—Men are never recovered till they are first made sensible of their disease. Sin is thy disease, and thy death; and thou art never recovered from that death till thou art brought to a sense of thy disease. Where there is life there will be sense. They are dead souls, alienated from the life of God, who are “past feeling.” (Ephes. iv. 18, 19.) Those that make light of sin, it is a sign they are not recovered. Sin is felt as a heavy thing, by those souls that have the life of Christ in them.

O, what multitudes of lost souls are there among us, if every soul be lost that makes light of sin! What account dost thou make of it? Thou sinnest daily, thou livest an idle, and a careless, and a sinful life; thou art proud or covetous, or a sensual flesh-pleaser: and is not all this thy sin? Thou art a liar, a promise-breaker, a defrauder: and is not this thy sin? Thou art perverse and peevish, and of a froward heart: and is not this thy wickedness? But what account dost thou make of all this? Is it a heavy thing to thee, to be thus sinful? No, not at all: thou makest light of thy pride, and light of thy covetousness, and light of

thy frowardness: thou makest just nothing of them, or at least but small matters. Thou dost not feel them to be such a weight and burden to thee, but thou canst bear them, and go out with them well enough. Or, if thou dost sometimes feel some smart or pain by them, it is but such a light touch, that whatever thou thinkest at present, thou wilt quickly go after them again, at thy lying again, at thy swearing again, at thy foppish and froward carriages again. It is such a deep sense of sin, as will make us beware of it for the future, that will prove our recovery. What shall we then think of them that make a mock at sin, that make a sport of sin, that take pleasure in iniquity? Without all controversy, these are lost souls, and those that make but little reckoning of it, that pass by their sins as small matters, that are either not touched at all, or but slightly touched for them, so lightly that their sin hath still the power and dominion over them; thou that art but such a one, thou art a lost soul, thy soul is lost, and not recovered.

Fourth. Those that make light of Christ their recoverer.—Christ, that is sent down as the Physician of souls, to seek and to save them that are lost, hath ordinarily the same entertainment as the King in the parable had amongst the guests that he invited to his feast,—“*but they made light of it.*” (Matt. xxii. 5.) Here,

(First.) There are some sinners who make light of Christ.—Jesus Christ is worthy of all acceptation. What is Jesus Christ? He is the Son of God, full of grace and truth. (John i.) God, equal with the Father, the brightness of his Father’s glory, the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power. (Heb. i. 3.) He is the head of all principalities and powers, the Prince of the Kings of the earth. (Rev. i. 5.) What is Jesus Christ to sinners? He is the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. (Isaiah ix. 6.) His name shall be Wonderful. Why does this Jesus come into the world? To reconcile them to God, to save them from their sins, to die for the sins of the world, and to wash them in his own blood. And for what end does he come to particular sinners? Wherefore is he preached to them, wherefore is he offered

to them? To what end is it that sinners are so importunately invited to entertain and accept of him; to be willing that he, who was the Saviour, might become their Saviour; that he, that was the reconciler, might become their recoverer; to rescue them from the snares of the devil, and bring them to his everlasting kingdom? This is that Jesus, who by the Gospel is preached unto you.

Who could imagine, that such a great, and mighty, and glorious one, who is the everlasting King, the God of all the earth, who would think but he should be revered wherever he came? "*They will reverence my son,*" (Matt. xxi. 37,) said the King in the parable. It might be well presumed they would, however it proved in the issue. Who could imagine that one that came upon such a gracious design, to reconcile poor rebels to God, to redeem poor prisoners out of prison, to recover and raise the dead to life, and ransom them from the pit, and give them an entrance into the everlasting kingdom; who would think but Christ, coming upon such a gracious and glorious design, should have wonderful cheerful entertainment? Who would think, but that the whole world would ring with acclamations of joy and praise, at his appearing amongst them? Who would think but when Christ comes to particular sinners, and makes a free offer of himself to them, to be theirs, their Redeemer, their Saviour, but that such an offer would be eagerly received and readily embraced? Doth the King of Glory come unto me? Hast thou shed thy blood, and poured forth thy soul, and laid down thy life, and purchased pardon and an interest in heaven for me? And dost thou now come to give thyself, and all that thou hast purchased, to be mine? What answer would any one think should be given by lost souls to such questions? Wilt thou be mine? Shall I be thine? Art thou willing to be redeemed, to be washed from thy sins, to be healed of thy diseases? Shall my blood, which is shed for the salvation of sinners, shall my blood be thine, and the peace and reconciliation it hath made be thine? Shall I come into that miserable soul of thine, and dwell there, and rule there, and cast out that devil which hath been thy destroyer and murderer? Shall I love thee, and delight

in thee, and bless thee with my salvation? What answer would any one think undone lost sinners would give to such questions? What, wilt thou come unto me, love and bless me? With all my soul, Lord! Come in, thou blessed Lord! All that is within me shall rejoice, that thou wilt thus enter and take me for thy possession and habitation. This, one would think, would be the answer that sinners ought to give. But behold, such miserably foolish souls are sinners become, that they make light of all this. A cup of drink, a carnal companion, a lust, a sensual pleasure, is made more reckoning of than Christ and all his love. As it is said of those builders, the Scribes and Pharisees, (Acts iv. 11,) it is true of all sinners, that this stone, this precious stone, this corner-stone, this foundation-stone, upon which alone their hopes of salvation might be built, this stone is set at nought by them. "*He was despised and rejected of men.*" (Isaiah liii. 3.) They made no account or reckoning of him, but even trod under foot the Son of God. And this is the general entertainment that Christ hath among the sinners of the earth, so light do they make of him: he comes to them, but they will not receive him. "*How often,*" says he, "*would I have gathered you, but you would not!*" (Matt. xxiii. 37.)

And what is proved to be the common case of sinners, is it not *thy* case? Art not thou one that makest light of Christ? He hath been preached unto thee, he hath come and tendered himself to thy soul. That vile heart of thine, sinner, that dark hole, where the devil and lust and every abomination dwells, Christ hath come and called to thee, saying, Open to me: let me come and dwell there, and cast the devil out! How many knocks hath he given at thy door? How many messengers hath he sent to thee with this word,—Open those wretched hearts; open the everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in? And hast not thou slighted all this, and put a contempt and scorn upon an offered Jesus? Who? I! God forbid! I adore and honour that worthy name; I acknowledge him to be the Son of the living God, and the Saviour of the world, and worthy of all acceptance. I, but hast thou

accepted? Hast thou opened unto him? Hast thou received Christ Jesus the Lord? Is Christ within thee? Is the light of Christ, the love of Christ, the holiness of Christ, in thee? Hast thou resigned the throne and dominion of thy soul to him, and given him a hearty leave to put all that is within thee, in subjection to himself, and to cast out whatever is an offence to him?—to cast the world out, to cut the flesh down, and the lusts thereof? Hath he made thee anew, and moulded thee afresh?

Is there another spirit begotten in thee? a new heart bestowed upon thee? Hath he made a Christian of thee; a sincere inward Christian, not in word only, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth? Art thou become his hearty disciple, and his follower in holiness? Hath he given thee the understanding of a Christian? Dost thou know God, and art thou now acquainted with the mystery of the kingdom of God?

Dost thou know Christ, and the mystery of Christ crucified? Hath he given thee the heart and affections of a Christian? Hath the world lost thine heart? Have thy companions lost thee,—thy carnal pleasures lost thee? Is thine heart set upon Christ, and upon all his holy ways? Art thou now brought about from sinful pleasing of men, or affecting to live in their good repute and good will, to be all for pleasing God? Is thy soul, that was bent upon earth, and the vanities thereof, now bent for God, and for heaven,—and for holiness, the way to the kingdom of heaven?

Sinner, if thou hast received Christ into thy soul, all these works are begun; there is such a change as this wrought upon thee. He that is in Christ is a new creature. (2 Cor. v. 17.) And if there be no such change,—if thine old ignorance, thine old worldliness, thine old delight in the lusts, or friendship, or fellowship of the world, remain; if thou hast not the inward proof of a Christian, a holy heart, a heavenly mind,—yea, and something of the outward mark of a Christian, a holy conversation, a heavenly life: if there be not such a change wrought in thee, if thou art still of the same life, and the

same spirit thou wast formerly—thou hast not received Christ: he hath been offered thee, but thou wouldst none of him; he hath come unto thee, but thou hast refused him. And whatever honour thou hast in thy mouth for Christ, if thou hast refused to receive him, thou art one of those who make light of Christ, yea, and set him at nought. That which is rendered refusing,—“*The stone which was refused by the builders,*” (Psalm cxviii. 22,) is expressed to be, setting at nought,—“*This is the stone which was set at nought.*” (Acts iv. 11.) Sinners, every one of you that has not received Christ into your hearts, has set Christ at nought: you have despised and trampled him under your foot: and if you go away from his word to-day, as you have used to do other days, and return home without accepting of him, you go on to set Christ at nought. You that hear Christ preached, and will not receive him, if you should be asked, when you come home, what you have done at church to-day, you must answer, “I have put a slight and contempt upon Christ: he was preached to me, and I was told of his wonderful excellencies, and his worthiness; but I have despised and neglected all. I have been at church, but to mock Christ, and to set him at nought.” This do every one of you, to whom Christ is preached, and you will not receive him.

(Second.) Those that make light of Christ are not recovered by him.—This is so evident from what hath been said, that I shall add no more concerning it but this: If Christ be the only instrument in the recovery of lost souls, then those that refuse him are not recovered. He is our Redeemer, and there is no other Saviour. He is our Physician, and there is no other helper, “*neither is there salvation in any other.*” (Acts iv. 12.) If there be no other Saviour than Christ Jesus the Lord; if there be none recovered by Christ, but those that prize and put a high value on Christ, so as to embrace and accept of him;—then those that make light of Christ, and refuse him, are lost souls to this day. These are the negative marks which evidence souls to be still lost. If you are not grossly ignorant, but have understood something of the doctrine of Christ;

if you have something of conscience, if some prizing of Christ, still you may not be recovered; and if not, thou art a fearfully ignorant soul, and of no conscience: to be sure thou art a lost soul to this day.

ii. Affirmatively.

First. The man whose eyes are opened.—That is, who hath recovered his understanding, and the saving knowledge of God. The first step towards the conversion of a sinner, is the recovery of his sight. “*To open blind eyes,*” &c. (Acts xxvi. 18.) It is not every little opening the eyes, and obtaining a little knowledge, that is a sure sign of conversion: there are knowing sinners, knowing hypocrites. It is an enlightening of the mind, and a renewing of the mind: “*Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.*” (Rom. xii. 2.) The mind of the convert doth not only see other things than it saw before, but looks upon them with another eye: as he hath another heart, so he hath another eye, a renewed mind, a sanctified understanding, that perceives the beauty and excellency of God and his ways, of Christ and his grace; that sees wisdom, and goodness, and an excellency and desirableness in them. The carnal mind, whatever it perceives of the things of God, yet they are foolishness to him: “*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them.*” (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

Where see, (First,) What account carnal men have of spiritual things.—They look upon them as foolish, poor, and weak, and contemptible things; and upon those who possess them as a company of fools, and giddy brain-sick folks, that will have anything to do with them.

(Second.) That whilst he looks on the things of God as foolishness, contemptible, and unworthy things, he doth not know them: nor can he know them whilst he continues to be such a foolish soul.—Thou takest upon thee to censure those that fear God as fools, and to charge religion with folly! Proud fool! Get thee a little more understanding, and then thou wilt see what an ignorant, poor, mistaken soul thou art. The convert looks upon the Gospel, and the goodness of God, and the grace of

Christ, and the holiness of the Spirit, as marvellous things, excellent things; he sees an excellency in religion, a beauty and desirableness in all the ways of God; he sees the folly of sin, and the wisdom of religion; the baseness and unworthiness and filthiness of sin, and the worth and the purity of religion; he sees himself to have been a very beast and a fool, whilst he continued and went on in his sins, and can never have a good thought of himself: but as far as he is changed from his sins, he looks upon the little change that is begun, as a blessed change, and a comfortable change. Now I have something of the understanding of a man returned unto me; now I thank God I begin to live and stand up from among the dead. O, I thank God for this little wisdom that is begotten in me! I was a very fool till now: I have been told I was a fool; I have been told I was a beast many a time; but I could never see it till now, until the Lord hath thus opened mine eyes. This is some degree of the sinner's recovery, such an opening of his eyes; though it is possible he may be much recovered in this respect, and yet a sinner still.

Second. The man whose heart is opened.—Thus Lydia's conversion is expressed: "*Whose heart the Lord opened.*" (Acts xvi. 14.) There is a double opening of the heart.

(First.) An opening of the heart to the Lord, so as to receive and embrace him when offered.—The hearts of natural men are shut against the Lord: they are not only void of grace, and without Christ, but bolted and barred against Christ, and his grace; they are unwilling of conversion, unwilling of sanctification. "*O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean?*" (Jer. xiii. 27.) No, they will not. O sinner, wilt thou not have the Lord to be thy God? wilt thou not have Jesus to be thy Lord? Wilt thou not, that he should come into that soul of thine, and wash thee with his blood, and govern thee by his Spirit? make thee a new soul, and of another spirit than thou hast been? No, thou wilt not: thine heart is shut against Christ! To the devil thou wilt open; to the world, and its lusts and its pleasures, thou wilt open thine heart: nay, it stands open night and day to these; but it is shut against Christ and his grace: thou art not willing that Christ should come

in. Sinners, if your hearts would but open, Christ would come in this very hour, and bring in his salvation. There is not one man amongst you all, that shall go home this day without Christ, without the sanctifying grace of Christ, that is but unfeignedly willing to give entertainment to him. Art thou willing of Christ, willing to have grace? Wilt thou so receive Christ as to resign up thyself to his guidance and government,—art thou really willing? This is the very opening of thine heart to the Lord wherein thy conversion stands. Thou art the man whose heart the Lord hath opened.

(Second.) An opening the heart to godliness, or Christianity.—The former opening denotes a readiness of the heart to receive Christ, and his grace. This opening of the heart denotes the soul letting itself out after Christ and his holy ways; a letting itself out in holy desires, in love and holy affections, in resolutions and holy purposes to serve and cleave to the Lord. When the heart is open to Christ, it is open to Christianity. When it hath received Christ Jesus the Lord, it will be for walking in him. The heart of the hypocrite, though it professeth to be open to Christ, is shut against Christianity.

Hypocrites are willing to have a part in Christ,—in the privileges, and hopes, and comforts of the Gospel; and so will trust in Christ, and boast of Christ, and glory and rejoice in Christ Jesus: but as to the exercise of Christianity; especially in those harder and severer parts of it,—mortifying the flesh, denying themselves, being crucified to the world, the close and downright and industrious following the Lord in holiness,—of this they are not willing, their hearts are shut against it. That heart that is sincerely opened to the Lord, and hath indeed taken Christ in, doth freely open itself to all the ways of the Lord, and hath a propensity, and disposition, and resolution for powerful and practical Christianity. He is a resolved disciple of Christ, and a resolved follower. Now this is the recovered soul,—the man whose eyes are opened; who hath the knowledge of God; of the beauty, and excellency, and goodness of the ways of God: and the man whose heart is opened, who hath both received Christ

Jesus the Lord, and who is resolved to walk in him, is the soul that was dead, and is alive.

USE. I. Are sinners lost souls?—1. Then let us take up a lamentation over them.—What a lamentation did the Prophet take up over the sinful Jews: “*O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!*” (Jer. ix. 1.) O what a slaughter hath sin made among us!—our houses, our streets, our congregations, how full are they of the dead; dead souls whom sin hath slain! Behold the dead that are in every place!—so many sinners, so many dead and lost souls. Here be the dead, but where are the mourners? “*Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning women,*” skilful at mourning, “*and let them make haste and take up a wailing for us; that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters.*” (Ver. 17, 18.)

Women are more pitiful than men, and more apt to mourn: Call, says he, for the pitiful among women; let them wail for us, and let them set us mourning: let the women set the men mourning, that *our eyes may run down with tears*: and let the mothers “*teach the daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation.*” (Ver. 20.) Why, what is the matter?—O, “*death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces.*” (Ver. 21.) Our houses are houses of the dead. It is not only with us as with Egypt, when the first-born were slain, when there was not a house in the land wherein was not one dead: there are but few houses in our land where there is one alive; they are almost all dead,—dead fathers, dead children, dead husbands, dead wives,—dead in trespasses and sins. Death hath not only entered in at our windows, and slain here and there one, but the doors have been set open to it; whole families are destroyed. Our houses are become sepulchres,—places of the dead.

But why should we mourn over lost souls?

(1.) Because there are multitudes of them.—Come where you will, into what country, into what family, into what congregation you will, you may see almost as many dead

men, as you see men. It is but here and there one living soul is to be found. Such a great slaughter as that which sin hath made calls for great lamentation.

(2.) Because they are in such a pitiful and lamentable case.—What is it to be a dead and lost soul? Where shall we have them a little while hence? Those that are under the power of death, are under the power of the devil; and those that are under the power of the devil, you may look to find them shortly in the place of the devil. At present they seem to be in a paradise: they live at ease, and in plenty, and in peace: there are none seem to be so much alive as the sinners of the earth: "*We call the proud happy;*" (Malachi iii. 15;) and the profane and flesh-pleasers, and the covetous, these are counted happy. They are fat, they shine, they glitter!—who, but sinners? These are the only men, the only happy men, as the world counts them! But whatever there be outwardly upon their backs, or within,—their poor hearts are dead: and, where shall we find these flourishing and prospering ones a few days hence? It would pity our hearts to think where! What, if you should see all these dead buried,—buried in flames, cast into the pit of everlasting darkness, and everlasting burning? You cannot but foresee that there they will be shortly, and that thither they are travelling; their way is the way of death, and their steps lead down to hell; and how suddenly may they be swallowed up in the pit! O pity these lost souls! Have you any bowels? Parents, have you any bowels for your sinning children? Friends, have you any bowels for your sinning friends? Draw forth your bowels in sighs and lamentations; pour forth your hearts at your eyes, and fall weeping over them: look upon the ignorant and sottish ones, look upon the loose and profane ones,—the lying children, the swearing, and cursing, and drinking, and unruly children among you; and let your eye affect your heart. Yea, weep not for them only, "*but weep for yourselves, and for your children.*" (Luke xxiii. 28.)

(3.) Because they will not mourn for themselves.—They are not sensible of their own misery, nor will they lay it to heart. These lost souls are men beside themselves,

distracted ones, out of their wits, *ut supra*. The prodigal was out of his wits whilst he was running his wild course: he was not himself. What sense have madmen of their misery? They count themselves to be wise and happy, and all others to be fools. How shall we hear distracted souls talking of their lands and inheritances; boasting some of them that they are kings, and lords, and gentlemen, though they be even stark naked, half starved, bound with thongs and chains,—yet still they have high thoughts and make great boastings! Such mad souls are the miserable souls of sinners! “*Vain man would be wise, though he be as a wild ass’s colt.*” (Job xi. 12.) These wild men, that run a wild course, that have lost their reason in their lusts, would be taken for wise men, and will not be persuaded out of their vain conceits of themselves. “*Bray a fool in a mortar, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.*” (Prov. xxvii. 22.) Now this is cause of great lamentation,—that these lost souls are such stupid and senseless souls, that will not mourn for themselves, nor be brought to understand that they are objects of pity and lamentation: they think they are wiser than their teachers, that they have more wit than to become sober and serious Christians, that they have no need of the physician, no need of counsel and instruction; and thereupon are ready to laugh at those that mourn over them, and to mock at repentance and conversion. Surely those that are in such a miserable case, and have not the heart to mourn for themselves, or to count themselves mournful and pitiful spectacles, there is the more reason we should take up a lamentation over them.

Let us lament, therefore, that there are such multitudes of miserable souls,—that there are so few among those multitudes of lost ones, that we ever see recovered. O, how few are converts to Christ! How seldom do we hear of any lost sheep being brought into the fold! You that are brought in, pity those that are left without: mourn for them, let fall a tear over them, lift up a prayer for them, that though they have gone astray like lost sheep, they at length may return to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.

And you that are these lost souls, how is it that you are not yet come so far to yourselves as to see what a pitiful case you are in? Sinners, will you yet go away conceited, that it is well enough with you? Is it better with you than if you were converts? Are the brick-kilns of Egypt, as long as you can eat of the leeks, and onions, and melons, better than the freedom of Canaan? Do the pleasures of sin make your chains pleasant to you? Is it better to go on to serve the devil and your lusts, than to come about and be the servants of the Lord? Or, whether it be better or worse, wisdom or folly, discretion or madness, are you resolved, however, to continue as you are? Have you not the sense in you, so as to be able to say, It is a sorry case I am in? Or, do you see it is bad enough with you, and yet have not the power to seek after a recovery? Hast thou not pity upon that poor soul of thine, but thou wilt give it up to be racked, and torn, and burned for ever, rather than for its sake thou wilt deny thy will, or thy lust, or thine appetite? Art thou still so mad as to say, "Live or die, heaven or hell, whatever be the issue, I will not turn out of my course; I will not come unto God, and be his servant? If there be a hell, I will venture on its flames; if there be a God, I will venture his wrath, rather than not enjoy my will, or mine ease, or my pleasure!" Is this thy case? Judge, then, if thou be not a pitiful and lamentable thing, and an object of mourning: and, if thou canst get so much of a man in thee, so much of the reason and understanding of a man, so much of the heart and compassion of a man, O, pity thyself! Pity thy poor soul; pity and mourn over it; mourn and repent: repent and pray, that if it be possible, thou mayest recover thyself out of the snare of the devil, by whom thou art thus held captive at his will.

2. Let us take up a rejoicing over the recovered souls.—Our great joy should be, every man over the recovery of his own soul. With what joy should this word be spoken, This *my* soul was dead, and is alive! And we should rejoice over any other recovered souls. It is matter of rejoicing, when we can say, This my child, or this my

brother, or this my neighbour, was dead, and is alive. What joy is it to a travailing woman, when she is safely delivered of a living child! "*A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man child is born into the world.*" (John xvi. 21.) Sinners, your deliverance may cost you pain and travail; but when you are once delivered and recovered, you will forget all this pain: then you will, and then you ought to rejoice. What joy is the day of victory to the triumphing soldier! What joy was the year of jubilee to the indebted, or to the servants, when they were to go free from their debts and service! What joy to the mariner, who hath been tossed with tempests, to have arrived safe on shore! Hast thou shot the gulf, and gotten safe to land? Hast thou death and hell under thy feet? Is death destroyed, and is life and immortality brought to light in thy soul? Art thou passed from death to life? O what a day of joy, what a day of praise, should this be to thee! "*Rejoice in the Lord,*" O ye righteous; "*and again I say, Rejoice.*" (Phil. iv. 4.) Stand, Christian,—stand and look back on that death that was lately feeding on thy soul; stand and look down into the hole of the pit from whence thou art delivered. Remember how it was with thee, not long since, when thou wast without Christ, and without hope, and without God in the world: when thou wast a slave to every lust in thy heart, to every vile companion; when thou wast led by the destroyer, and posting on to destruction; when thou wast without fear, and without sense of that danger and misery, which was running upon thee like a flood. Remember how it was with thee, when God first opened thine eyes, and thy fears came upon thee. How did thy soul cry out, I am lost, I am undone! when thou didst see what a gulf there was fixed between thy natural estate, and the state of grace? when thou sawest a necessity of conversion, and yet wast astonished at the difficulty of obtaining it? when thy proud heart would not stoop, thine hard heart would not break, nor yield unto the Lord? when thou wast afraid that thou shouldest have perished in the birth, and never

have seen life? Remember how it hath been with thee, and how it is now. What, hath the Lord delivered thee from thy fears, conquered for thee thy difficulties? Is thine heart broken, and brought about to the Lord? Is the day broken, and the day-star risen in thine heart? Art thou passed from death to life? What sayest thou now? Is it not meet thou shouldst rejoice? Is not this birth-day, the day of thy new birth, a day of joy and praise? Dost thou not bless thyself, that it is not with thee as it hath been? Does not thine heart shake to think, What, if I had been let alone, allowed to go on in the way that I was going! I went with the drunkards; I was among the liars, and swearers, and covetous, and scoffers: I was one of them: as much against a new heart, and new life, as any of them; as true a drudge to the flesh and this world, as the worst of them. How is it that the Lord God singled my soul out of that wicked crowd, and brought me up out of that state of the dead, and led me into the light of life, and hath written me among the living in Jerusalem? Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Magnify the Lord, O my soul; and let my spirit rejoice in God my Saviour. He that is mighty hath done for me great things, and holy is his name.

3. Let us again take up a lamentation over the imperfection of our recovery.—Rejoice in the Lord, but “rejoice with trembling.” (Psalm ii. 11.) Rejoice that the work is begun, that thou art come to the morning of the day of redemption; that the day is dawned, that the sun is risen upon thee: yet lament that there are still such clouds; yea, so much of the darkness of the night remaining upon thee. Rejoice that thou art born again; but lament that though thou art made a child of light, there is so much of thine old darkness, of thine old ignorance and unbelief abiding upon thee; that though thou art born from above, yet thine heart should be so much below; that though thou art risen with Christ, thy affections should be so little set on things above; that though thou art born of the Spirit, the flesh should still have such power over thee. Lament and bewail it, that thou art no more perfectly recovered; that it can yet hardly be discerned whether

thou be alive or dead; or, if it appear thou art alive, lament that thou art such a dwarf still, or such a sickly and unthriving child; that thou art such a froward and unruly child.

Lament that thy recovery is so imperfect, and be growing up towards perfection: be working out those remains of thine old corrupt state: be working out this carnality, and this earthliness, and working up thine heart to more spirituality and heavenliness: and let both thine heart and thy life be as the path of the just, "*which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*" (Prov. iv. 18.)

Christians, whilst I have hope of many of you that you are passed from death to life, and in this hope do rejoice over you, yet I have sorrow in mine heart for you, that you that have life, have it no more abundantly;—that you are yet so imperfectly recovered from among the dead, and that you are not (which I doubt is the case of too many among you) contending and reaching forwards towards perfection. How many living Christians soever there be of you, yet I can see but few growing Christians among you. Pray, friends, look inwards: what sensible improvement have any of you made of late years? Yea, how many of you are there that do not lay it to heart; that do not lament in that they are improved no more? Who of you can say, that you are breathing and thirsting after an increase? Or, if you thirst for more grace, how very few are reaching forth, and labouring,—and that in such good earnest that they are impatient in their spirits, and restless, till it may be better with them! O, what might I do to whet your appetites after an increase! to set you a running, and striving, and fighting against all that hinders! O, what might be said to get those creeping souls upon the wing! to quicken your motions heavenward! O, how might I help you off with those weights that hang on,—those weights of earth and of flesh, of cares, and lusts, and sins,—that you might run with patience, and run with alacrity and joyfulness, the race that is set before you! O consider the imperfect state you are in: consider, and lament it; lament, and make-on; forgetting the things

that are behind, reach forth unto those things which are before.

II. Are sinners yet recoverable?—O lose not the present season, but seek your recovery: "*Seek the Lord while he may be found.*" (Isa. lv. 6.) So, seek your souls whilst they may be found; seek recovery while it may be had. But what shall I do to recover?

1. Get you to be heart-sick of the misery that is upon you.—If ever God recover you, he will first smite you; he will wound you, that he may heal you. "*I will make thee sick in smiting thee,*" (Micah vi. 13,) said God in another case. The devil smites with a deadly wound; but God's wounds are healing wounds. "*Come, let us return to the Lord; for he hath smitten, and he will heal us.*" (Hosea vi. 1.) The devil smites with blindness; the devil smites with hardness, and insensibility of heart. What is the reason thou art such a blind, and hardened, and senseless soul? O, the devil hath smitten thee into this blindness and hardness! God's smiting of the heart is like Moses smiting the rock. (Exod. xvii. 6.) He smote the rock, and water issued out. God will so smite these rocks, as to fetch a stream of tears, and sighs, and groans, out of the hard heart: he will make those stones to feel. The devil's work is, to put sinners past feeling: and O, how successful hath he been at this work! Poor sinners,—the devil hath been at work with you, smiting you into insensibility: and what senseless souls hath he made you! Though the word of the Lord, which is sharper than a two-edged sword, and pierceth to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, hath been driven home upon you, yet you feel it not. The devil hath made thee such a stupid, senseless soul, that thou canst feel nothing. But God smites to recover your feeling: he will make you sick in smiting you: he will do so, if ever he mean to heal you.

O, sinner, do not resist, but help forward this work of God upon you. Do what you can to recover your own sense. Do not harden your hearts against the word; do not harden your hearts in your sins: pray that God would make you sick at the heart, under all your misery. It

would be some encouragement to ministers, to bring a healing word unto you, if we could once find you to be sick. If we could but recover your senses, we should have hope to save your lives : but here it is that our work sticks. We cannot, by all that we can say, recover you to sense,—to a sense of your lost estate. “*Wo is me, for I am undone,*” said the prophet, in another case. (Isa. vi. 5.) O might we hear such a word from sinners’ mouths,—Wo is me, for I am undone ! I am an undone soul ! I am a lost soul ! You are undone : you are lost souls ; and before ever you be soundly recovered, you will, by the sense and sickness of your hearts, be forced to acknowledge it,—Wo is me, for I am undone ! Sinner, dost thou think thyself well ? art thou whole, and ailest nothing ? This is thy senselessness ; and this senselessness is the most deadly part of thy disease : a sick man that is grown senseless, is the next step to a dead man : if sense be recovered, there is more hope of his life. What a word of hope would it be, might we hear this word running through all the company of hardened sinners here,—Wo is me, for I am undone ! What shall I do ? what will become of me ? I am a lost soul, dead in trespasses and sins ; held under the power of the devil, and dragged on to destruction. I am well enough as to my body, and my outward condition ; but O, my poor soul ! my poor blind soul ! my poor hardened soul ! my poor guilty soul !—in what a woeful case is it ? Could we perceive such a sense of your case, could we hear such bemoanings and complainings of your misery, this were hopeful ; we should then hope you were upon recovery, if we could by any means work you to such a sense of your state. But how is it with you, sinners ? Is there any such good token to be found upon you ? Sinners here be, God knows, enough of you ; but where be the smitten sinners ? Where be the sensible sinners, the broken sinners, the fearing sinners ? Where be the men that the word of God hath made sick in smiting ? As it is with some physic for the body, so it is with God’s physic for the soul,—it never worketh kindly, but it makes men sick in the working. Where be the sick sinners ? In one sense, you are all deadly sick ; but where be the

sinner whom God's physic hath made sick? whom the word hath made sick? whom conscience hath made sick; that is, hath made them feel their sickness? No, no: the Lord be merciful to you, your soul-physic will not work; it leaves you at your ease, under the hardness and insensibility of your hearts, as if you were indeed sound men, and needed nothing. But, sinners, know, that till you are wrought to a sense of the misery you are in, there is no hope of your recovery. Do but venture on a while longer in this stupid hardened state, and you will be past recovery: you are at present without feeling, but if you once be past feeling, you are past recovery for ever. O get you broken hearts! O cry unto the Lord, that he would smite you, and make you sick in smiting you; that he would set you a trembling; that he would affright you, and afflict you for your sins. O stir up and awaken those sleepy souls! O study and consider, and get a little understanding what a woeful case you are in! Believe God. He tells sinners that they are sons of death,—sons of perdition, under condemnation. Believe God before the devil, and your own hearts. These have agreed together to tell you a lie, to tell you your case is not so bad,—you shall do well enough, you shall escape well enough! Believe not the devil, believe not your deceitful hearts: believe God, believe the Scriptures: read over that word, and see how dreadfully it speaks of the case of sinners, and know that all this it speaks to thee; all the plagues and terrors of the Lord, which you read or hear out of the Scriptures, these words belong to you who are yet in your sins.

Sinners, I would fain preach you to Christ, and preach you to life. I would do mine utmost to save and recover your lost souls: and, O, let me help you to Christ! let me be a means of your recovery! But that I have no hope of, unless you will so far heed and believe the word that I preach, and lay it so close and so home upon your hearts, that you may no longer be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. O that it might be said concerning you, upon hearing of these words, as concerning others,—
“And when they heard this, they were pricked in their

heart, and said, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" (Acts ii. 37.)

Sinner, may it be said so concerning thee? Hath this word pricked thee to the heart? Dost thou feel thy heart ache? Dost thou tremble? art thou afraid? and in that fear dost thou cry out, *Men and brethren, what shall I do? wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? Hath it made thee so sick, that thou art calling after the physician? Is there such a cry in thy soul,—Help, Lord, save, Lord, or I perish! Wo is me, I am undone! what must I do to be saved? If the Lord hath made thee thus sick, in smiting thee; sick of thy covetousness, sick of thy wickedness, and of that bondage thou art hitherto held under;—if the word of the Lord hath pricked thee to the heart, and put thee to pain, so that nothing but a deliverance from thy wretched state can ease thee, or satisfy thee;—if it be thus with thee, if thou art thus sick, thus pricked at the heart;—then be of good comfort: it is a hopeful sign, that thou art upon recovery: there is now good hopes concerning thee, that though thou art dead, thou mayest yet be made alive.*

2. Understand what Christ hath done, and must do, for your recovery.—Christ is our only Redeemer and Reconciler: and Christ redeems,

(1.) By price. (2.) By power.

(1.) Christ redeemeth by price.—“*Ye are bought with a price.*” (1 Cor. vi. 20.) Christ himself was that price, and he laid down his life as a price for us. In this respect he is called our ransom. “*He gave his life a ransom for many.*” (Matt. xx. 28.) His redeemed ones are called his ransomed ones. (Isa. xxxv. 10.) We by sin are become prisoners and captives,—prisoners to the justice of God, to whom by sin we had forfeited our lives: and justice took hold of us as a company of traitors and malefactors, whom it condemned to death. Now Christ paid himself: to divine justice he gave himself to die, that he might ransom us from death. Let me stand in these sinners’ stead; let thine hand be upon me, and let them escape. Death is the wages of sin: Let my death, says Christ, pay those wages.

(2.) Christ redeemeth by power.—Sinners were prisoners

to divine justice, and captives to the devil. (2 Tim. ii. 26.) By price, he redeems them from the avenging justice of God; and by power, he redeems them from the devil. In the former sense, he redeemed us as a purchaser,—he bought our lives: in the latter sense, he redeemeth as a conqueror,—the devil held us, and death held us too. Death reigned over all: Christ conquereth both death and the devil. “*That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*” (Heb. ii. 14.) “*Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*” (Col. ii. 15.) He brake the serpent’s head, as it was promised he should, (Gen. iii. 15,) that he could no longer hold his captives. The devil tempted him to sin; but he overcame the temptation, and sinned not. The devil set the Jews to slay him; but he overcame death, by his resurrection from the dead. The devil got him among the dead; but he could not hold him,—he rose from the dead, by which it was impossible for him to be holden beyond the time appointed. And as Christ conquered the devil, and conquered death, so he conquereth sin too. He conquered the devil as our captain, so called Heb. ii. 10, “*The captain of our salvation:*” he broke the power of the devil, and led out his captives, as a captain doth his recovered prisoners. He conquers sin, as a physician, healing all those wounds and diseases which the devil had brought us under: he is therefore called a physician,—“*The whole have no need of a physician.*” (Matt. ix. 12.) This, now, is that which Christ hath done, and hath to do, for our recovery,—to give himself a price or ransom to the justice of God, by laying down his life for sinners, to break the power of the devil, to rescue us from his captivity, and to heal us of our sins, and thereby destroy the works of the devil.

3. Understand what sinners have to do towards their own recovery, that they may obtain the benefit of what Christ hath done and performed.—This I shall sum up in this one word:—to perform the conditions of their recovery. What are those conditions?

(1.) To accept of Christ as your ransom; to relinquish all other hopes of recovery, and to take him as our only

Redeemer. Some sinners reject Christ, and will none of him: they care not for a ransom, nor will they mind any such thing as their recovery, but are content to be slaves to sin and the devil for ever: like those slaves under the law, who when they might, would not go out from their masters, but would have their ears bored to the threshold, that they might not depart for ever. How many such desperate wretches are there among sinners? Sinners they are, and sinners they will be: slaves to the devil they are, because they will not accept of deliverance. Christ is preached to them as a Redeemer, and tendered to them as their ransom, and liberty is offered to these captives, but they will not accept him: they say in their hearts, as that servant,—I love my old master, I love my sins, I love my lusts,—those very chains by which the devil holds them, and thus do they reject Christ who comes to ransom them.

How is it, sinner, that thou art yet a captive to the devil, and a slave to thy sins? How is it that thou art left out from among the redeemed ones of the Lord? There is a ransom paid, there is a price laid down, to buy out that soul of thine from the wrath of God; and this ransom hath been offered thee, and thou hast been persuaded to come out of the prison; but yet, there thou art, yet a bond-slave to the devil and thy sin. Why is it thus with thee? Why?—only because thou wilt not accept of thy ransom; thou wilt not accept of Christ, who would redeem and recover thee. Thou art such a stupid, senseless soul, that thou dost not mind any such thing as thy recovery or redemption. Thou mindest thine ease, or thy pleasure; thou mindest thy trade and thy gains, and thy business in the world: but thou never mindest the redemption of thy soul; never hast such a thought,—How shall I escape out of the hands of the devil? How shall my soul be delivered from sin, and everlasting wrath? When dost thou use to mind seriously any such thing? Not being sensible of thy misery, thou mindest not thy recovery; and not minding thy recovery, hence it is that thou mindest not thy ransom or Redeemer, but makest light of Christ and his redemption; and makest so

light of him, that thou wilt not accept and embrace him when offered thee. Well, but whatever thou hast done, take heed thou do so no more. Hast thou yet this price in thine hand? is there yet a ransom to be had for that miserable soul of thine? Doth Christ yet stand over thee, offering thee his blood,—offering thee himself to be thy redemption? Take heed how thou goest away again; neglecting to accept and make him thine own. This is one condition upon which redemption may be yours,—if you will accept of Christ as your ransom.

(2.) To accept of Christ as your Captain.—To list yourself under him as his soldier; to give up yourself to be commanded, and ordered, and governed by him; to follow your great leader, when he hath broken the bars, and opened the prison-doors, and knocked the gaoler in the head, and commands you out of prison, and calls to you all, "Follow me." This is another condition of your recovery,—Follow your Captain.

There is no man that shall have the benefit of Christ's ransom, that will voluntarily stay behind in prison. Art thou resolved to serve the devil still, to follow thy lust still? Dost thou refuse to follow Christ, and to be commanded and governed by him? Then thou canst have no benefit by his ransom. "*He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.*" (Heb. v. 9.) Well, would you be recovered by Christ? Then list yourselves under him as your Captain; be commanded and governed by him.

(3.) To accept of Christ as your physician.—This accepting of Christ as your physician, notes three things:—

i. A willingness to be healed by Christ.—Some sinners, though they will say, I accept of Christ for my physician: yet they are not willing to be healed by him; they love their disease, and do not love their health. Sin is their disease, and holiness is the health of their souls. Sin is their disease, and yet they love their sin. Drunkards love to be drunkards, the voluptuous love their pleasures, the covetous love their covetousness, and the carnal their carnality. Swine do not more love the mud and the mire, and to be wallowing in it, than swinish sinners do the mire of their lusts and sins. Sometimes

they pray for recovery, pray for repentance, pray for new heart and life; but they would be loath that God should hear their prayers. Sin, which is their disease, is that they love; and holiness, which is their health, they loathe and hate. If Christ call to them, Come to me, and I will make a saint of thee; I will fetch thee off from thy drunken companions, I will cure thee of thy covetousness, I will wash thee from thy filthy lusts, and make thee one of my holy ones: what would they answer? No: I desire no such cure: I love my pleasures, and my company, and my covetousness, and my carnality: and for holiness, let them hearken to thee that have a mind to it; I have no list to be of those holy ones. When Christ came to cure bodily diseases,—the blind, and the lame, and the lunatic, and the possessed of devils,—how glad were they to be cured! But blind souls, and lame and lunatic souls, sick and diseased souls, are not willing of Christ's cure.

“*The carnal mind is enmity against God;*” (Rom. viii. 7;)

“*Thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.*”

(Psalm l. 17.) Sinners had rather that Christ would let them all alone as they are: they would that he should save them from hell, but they would not that he should turn them from their sins. Christ will never save men from wrath, who will not be healed of their sins; and Christ will not heal, till men be willing to be healed.

(i.) Christ will never save men from wrath, who will not be healed of their sins.—Unless he wash thee, he will not bless thee. “*If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.*” (John xiii. 8.) Whilst thou art a sinner, a swine, a viper, thou art a leper; thy very nature is swinish, viperous, and tainted with an hereditary leprosy. Christ will make another manner of creature of thee, than thou art, ere ever thou shalt see his salvation. Dost thou think that Christ will drive over these herds of swine into the land of promise? Will he people heaven with a generation of vipers? or with such an unclean leprous brood, as unconverted sinners are? Be not deceived, nothing that is unclean shall enter thither. That heart of thine must be changed, that corrupt nature of thine must be purged: of a swine, thou must be made a man, and the old must become a

new man, or thou wilt never be made a blessed man. If Christ do not heal thee, he will never save thee.

(ii.) Christ will heal none but those that are willing to be healed.—His first question to those he comes to cure, is the same as that which was put to the impotent man: "*Wilt thou be made whole?*" (John v. 6.) This question Christ is daily putting to you. You that are blind, will you that I should open your eyes? You that are possessed of a devil, of an unclean devil, of a proud devil, of a covetous devil; will you that I cast this devil out? You whom Satan hath bound these many years,—bound under a sensual, sinful, hardened heart; will you be loosed from these bonds? You whom the devil hath been leading on after your pleasures, or your carnal liberty, by the chain of your evil nature,—will you that I should cut the chain, and put a stop to the devil, and turn you back from your course, and never suffer you to be drunkards any longer, or flesh-pleasers any longer, or covetous any longer? Is it thy disease, that thou hast been such a vile liver so long? Wilt thou that I should put a stop to thee, that thou be such no more? Christ doth ask such questions of you,—Will you, that I should thus cure you of all this? And what do your hearts answer? Some, if they speak their hearts, must answer,—O, this curing me would be the killing of me; I cannot endure to think of such a change; it vexes my heart to think of parting with my beloved sins, which are as dear as life to me. But what sayest thou, sinner, for thy part? Art thou one of these unwilling souls; or art thou willing that Christ should cure thee, and cleanse thee from all thy sins? O get a willing heart! What, art thou such a sick soul, and not willing of the physician?—such a blind soul, and not willing to have thine eyes opened?—such a senseless hardened soul, and not willing that Christ should humble thee, and break thee?—such a vile and polluted soul, and not willing that Christ should wash thee? Art thou not willing that Christ should come and make a saint of thee? Hath sin made a very devil of thee, and art not thou willing that Christ should make thee a saint? What wouldst thou do in heaven, if thou wilt not be made a

saint? Or dost thou think thou mayest continue a devil whilst thou livest on the earth, and yet at last be a saint in heaven?

What say you, sinners? There be some, it may be, of you, that have made a mock at holiness, that have despised the saints that are on earth, and made them the objects of your scorn, rather than your desire; but, speak man, art thou willing that Christ should come this day and make thee a saint? Wilt thou that he should humble thee, and bring thee to repentance? Wilt thou that he should wash thee, and bring thee to holiness? Wouldst thou, who camest hither an ignorant sinner, a hardened sinner, an impenitent sinner, be glad at thine heart, if thou mayest return an enlightened, a convinced, yea, a converted sinner,—a believer, a sincere Christian? Wouldst thou carry home another heart than thou broughtest hither?—a new heart, transformed and changed into the image of him that created thee? Or art thou content to go home as thou camest,—such an ignorant, hardened, polluted creature? If thou be heartily willing of such a change as this, that is a great part of thy cure. Art thou willing to be cured, willing to be cleansed? Then bring forth that leprous soul of thine, lay it at the feet of Christ, and speak to him as the leper did,—*“Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.”* (Matt. viii. 2.) As vile a state as this soul of mine is in, as deadly as my diseases are, as very a leper as my soul is become, yet, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Let Christ hear such a word from thee,—Lord, help me! Lord, heal me! if thou wilt, thou canst! And then there is hope that thou mayest hear the same words from Christ, as that poor leper did,—*“I will, be thou clean! And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.”*

ii. Take Christ's medicines.—To what purpose is it that the physician come to a sick man, and prescribe for him, and advise him to what will recover him, if he will not take what he prescribeth. Christ hath medicines to recover sick souls; but his medicines must be taken, or they will not recover them. Christ's medicines are,

(i.) His blood.—His blood is purging and cleansing. (Heb. ix. 14; 1 John i. 7.) Therefore he is said to

wash us in his blood. By the blood of Christ is meant the same with the death of Christ. There is virtue in the death of Christ to destroy the life of sin. "*Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed.*" (Rom. vi. 6.) It is the body of sin that must be first laid at; the inward pravity of our natures, our original corruption. Christ's physic must be first applied to the root and fountain of our disease. Those sinful natures, those depraved habits and sinful dispositions within you, must be changed. The inward enmity must be slain; and there is nothing will do that but the blood of a crucified Jesus. That is the sovereign medicine that must help and heal you. But how must this medicine, the blood of Christ, be taken?

i. Christ himself must be taken.—Christ offers himself to you to be yours, and you must accept of him for your own. Your hearts must by faith consent unto Christ,—to put yourselves into his hands, to put your life into his hands, expecting, and depending upon him, trusting yourselves with him for your recovery. It is Christ alone, with whom I lay up all mine hopes, upon whose sufficiency and faithfulness I will venture my soul: if I die, I die under his hand; and if I live, I look for life only from him. Put yourselves thus into the hands of Christ, and take Christ into your hearts. Take him as your own: he gives himself to you, to be your own. Christ offers to every sinner among you,—I will be thine own, thine own Jesus, thine own Saviour, if thou be willing to have me. Take him at his word, since he says to thee I will be thine own, if thou wilt let thine heart lay hold on this blessed word, and say,—Content, Lord, since thou wilt, thou shalt be mine own: I accept thee with all my heart. Now if Christ be once yours, his blood shall be yours, his death shall be yours, and all the benefits of his death. Whereas, nothing of Christ can be yours, nor any fruit of his death, if he be not first yours. Let Christ be once embraced by you, and if there be any purging, or cleansing, or sin-killing virtue in his blood, your sins shall be purged away. If all that the blood of Christ can do for thee, will recover thee, thou shalt be recovered.

ii. You must have frequent recourse to the blood of Christ, by renewed acts of faith.—Look up to this crucified Jesus; cast thy polluted soul into the fountain of his blood. He is a “*fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness.*” (Zech. xiii. 1.) His blood is the fountain: cast thy soul into it. You are come “*to the blood of sprinkling.*” (Heb. xii. 24.) Christians are so, and they may freely lay hold on it for their cleansing.

1. Believe that there is virtue in him to cleanse thy soul: say with the woman, If I may but touch him, I shall be made whole. (Matt. ix. 21.)
2. Believe that it is free for thee.—Thou mayest come with boldness to him; Christ would have thee to be bold with him, and to lay thine help upon him. Believe that it is free for thee to lay hold on the blood of Christ: and,
3. Come and lay hold upon it.—Lean upon him for his help, and trust him for it.
4. Lift up a prayer to him.—Lord, here is a polluted dying soul, that is even lost and choked in the mud and mire of my sins; there is no help for me, but I must die and perish in them, if thou wilt not look upon me and save me. In thy bowels I have hope, in thy blood I have hope, and that is all the hope I have. O sprinkle me with thy blood, wash me in thy blood, and my soul shall live! Wherefore, Lord, didst thou die? Wherefore didst thou shed that precious blood? Was it not for the recovery of lost souls, for the cleansing of polluted souls? Is not my poor soul one of the number of those for whom Christ died? Have not I as great need of thee as any? Is it not thou thyself that hast brought this my soul to thy door, crying for thine help? Lord Jesus, hear! let some drops of that blood, some of the virtue of thy death, be shed abroad upon my sinful heart, and it shall live! My sins must die, Lord! or my soul will never recover: I must get this lust destroyed, this enmity slain, this proud and hard and stubborn heart broken: and nothing but the blood of Christ, the Lamb, will melt this hardness, or wash me from this uncleanness. This will do it: and therefore here I am come before the throne of thy grace; and here I will stand, and look, and beg, and hope, till thou hear and answer me. Help, Lord; for in thee I trust, and look only for thy salvation!

(ii.) His word.—The word of God as it is food for souls, so it is medicine or physic for souls, and it hath in it a remedy for every disease.

i. It is an awakening word to sleepy souls.—On these it thunders, that it may awaken them. Ministers must be as Barnabas,—sons of consolation; so also, as Boanerges,—sons of thunder: and all their thunderbolts they are to have out of the word of God. O how many trumpets have been sounded in your ears, how many thunder-claps have you heard, how many thundering sermons hast thou heard in thy time! What! and yet art thou asleep still? Man, what is that heart of thine made of? What a dead sleep art thou in, that art not yet awakened! This world is all asleep, asleep in their sins; and therefore the ministers of the word are to do as the prophet was to do,—“*Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgressions.*” (Isa. lviii. 1.)

Our first work is to call unto them as the mariners to Jonah,—“*O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, that we perish not!*” Awake thou that sleepest, stand up from the dead. This thunder is the voice of the Lord, &c.: “*The God of glory thundereth; the voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty; it breaketh the cedars, it shaketh the wilderness.*” (Psalm xxix. 3—8.) This word of the Lord, which is his voice, is a thundering voice: it breaketh the cedars—the tall and mighty sinners; and it shakes the wilderness—shakes up those beasts of the earth out of sleep. This sleepy evil is the disease of sinners, and it binds them up under a senselessness of all their other diseases, till the voice of the Lord doth shake them out of sleep.

ii. It is an enlightening word, that giveth sight to the blind.—In this word is that eye-salve, (Rev. iii. 18,) wherewith sinners' eyes are to be anointed, that they may see. This eye-salve are the instructions of God.

iii. It is for the breaking and mollifying hard hearts.—In the word is revealed,—

(i.) The righteousness and severity of God.—Herein “*the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*” (Rom. i. 18.) Thus

it is God's hammer, whereby he breaks the rocks ; and God's axe, whereby he hews the blocks in pieces.

(ii.) The goodness and kindness of God.—Thus it is God's oil, whereby he supples, and dissolves, and melts them into a pliability to his will.

iv. It is for the changing of the tempers, and the inward dispositions of sinners.—It is a transforming word,—“ *We are changed into the same image:*” (2 Cor. iii. 18 :) a sanctifying word,—“ *Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth.*” (John xvii. 17.)

This is one of Christ's medicines, and this medicine is to be taken. But what is it to take this medicine ? Why, it is to hear the awakening word, and to suffer it to work upon you, and to be awakened by it ; to receive the instructions of the word, and so to be enlightened by it ; to be broken and mollified, to be transformed and changed by it.

Now, this is that which I exhort you to, if you would recover : Let the word of God come, let it have free passage into your hearts, and let it do its work upon you. *First.* Be awakened.—When you hear an awakening word, let it shake you out of your sleep. Awake, sinners ! awake, you that sleep ! hear the voice of the Lord, and rouse you out of that secure and senseless state. Where is it that thou sleepest ? At the very mouth of the lions' den ; on the top of a mast ! I have heard of a drunken man riding in the night on full speed, he knew not whither : he rode to the top of St. Vincent's rock near Bristol, and the horse and man tumbled down : the horse was dashed to pieces, the man caught by the boughs of a tree, and there fell asleep till morning. It was a strange place to sleep in : none but a drunken man could have slept in such a place ! In such a desperate sleep art thou, as upon the brow of a rock, on the bough of a tree ; whence thou art every moment in danger of dropping into the deep. Sleeping sinners, this is the case of every one of you ! It is a wonder you have not broken your necks, that you have not fallen into the deep before this day ; and yet here you are, asleep still ! Awake, you that sleep, and understand the danger you are in. *Second.* Get those blind eyes of yours opened, and receive the instructions of the word.—Here we bring

you eye-salve: be anointed with it, that you may see.

Third. Get those hard hearts broken and melted.—God's hammer is lifted up: lay that stony, that hard heart of thine under it, that it may be broken. God's axe is hewing: come, bring that knotty piece under it, that it may be cut and cloven asunder. Consider the severity and kindness of God: his severity, if thou still continue in thine hardness; if his hammer do not break thee, his millstones, his wrath and indignation, will shortly grind thee to powder. Consider his severity, and consider his goodness and kindness: what a wonder is it that after thou hast so long abused the goodness of God, and hardened thyself against mercy,—that mercy should not have given thee up, and let thee alone to perish without remedy! It is a mercy of God, that he is yet preaching to thee of his severity; it is the mercy of God that he is yet hammering and hewing at that hard heart of thine. God is so good and so kind to thee, that he hath sent his word once more, to try if any good may be done upon thee: he is loath thou shouldest perish, he would fain thou shouldest recover and live: he hath pity upon thee, he hath compassion upon that wretched soul of thine; and thence is it, that he continues to be dealing with thee for thy recovery. O wonder,—wonder that such mercy should not melt thee; that such goodness and kindness should not wound thee to the soul; that thou shouldest abuse such strange grace; that thou shouldest yet resist and stand it out against such a God of compassion! Wonder at thyself and be ashamed; wonder and be confounded; and blush, and weep, and fall down now, at last, and yield unto God! What, art thou hardened still?—a stone, or a stock still? Wilt thou go away as far from remorse, as far from repentance, as thou camest hither? God forbid, man! God forbid, that yet thou shouldest provoke the Lord farther against thee. Thou hast gone away hardened from many a Sabbath; thou hast gone away hardened from many a sermon: and must this day, and this word, leave thee as all the rest have done? When dost thou hope to be recovered, if thou wilt not be broken? Wilt thou say, It is no matter though I never be recovered;

though I perish and die in this hardened state? Wouldest thou fear to be left alone till thou be past recovery, to be lost for ever? Then yield to the stroke of the word, and let thine heart be humbled and broken, and brought to repentance. *Fourth.* Get the temper of your hearts changed.—Let the word work to the mollifying of you, and to the changing of you; to the renewing you after the image of God in righteousness and holiness. Whatever awakenings there have been of your sleepy consciences; whatever light or understanding there may be conveyed into your minds; yea, and whatever wounds and breaches there have been made upon your hard hearts; yet till you be renewed in the very frame, and temper, and dispositions of your hearts, never count yourselves recovered. Thou art a lost soul till thou art a sanctified soul: that is, till thine heart be broken off, and brought back from the love, and lusts, and ways of this world, and brought about unto God and his holy ways; till godliness be gotten into thine heart, and formed into thy nature, and thou hast a love of it, and hearty good liking to it; and the very bent of thine heart, which was formerly towards sin and vanity, be now towards holiness and heaven. When thou art brought to this, this new frame of heart, then thou art recovered.

Now, sinners, let this be that you have in your eye, and upon your hearts; let this be your endeavour, let this be your prayer, that God would thus bless his word to you, that it may awaken your sleepy consciences, enlighten your blinded minds, soften and break your hardened hearts; that you may be changed and renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness; that you may be wrought into a new temper, changed into another spirit, loving and savouring and delighting in the holy ways of God; that religion may become sweet and pleasant to you; that your spirits may be made suitable to God and his holy ways; that the food of God may relish with you, and the work of God may be more easy to you. Sick men can neither relish their food, nor endure their work. Dost thou find no relish in religion? Does the work of holiness seem contrary to thee? Dost thou groan under it, as that thou

canst not bear? Dost thou groan under this praying, and repenting, and watching, and striving against sin, and denying thyself, and mortifying thy flesh? Canst thou not endure to be held to such work? It is a sign that thy sickness is still upon thee, and thou art not recovered. O get your hearts to be so changed and renewed by the word and Spirit of the Lord, that both the food of God may relish with you, and his work be pleasant.

iii. His rod.—Sinners are fools, and the rod is physic for fools. “*The rod is for the fool's back.*” (Prov. xxvi. 3.) “*Before I was afflicted I went astray;*” but the rod reduced me: “*now have I kept thy word.*” (Psalm cxix. 67.) Sinner, thou hearest the awakening word; but it doth not awaken thee: thou sleepest on. Thou hearest the mollifying and breaking word; but it does not break nor mollify thee: thou art still a wilful, stubborn soul, and thine heart is so obstinately set upon thy loose and wild ways, that thou wilt not be broken off thy will, nor broken off from thy course. But God may bring some affliction upon thee, bring thee into poverty, cast thee on thy sick bed, set death at the foot of it to stare thee in the face,—and this will tame thee. Then thou mayest be spoken to; then the word, there is hope, will enter, and work upon thee. Indeed some sinners are so desperately hardened, that neither word nor rod will do. What afflictions come, they rather stupify than awaken them; they continue as very stocks under the smiting of God, as they are under his teaching: and therefore, take heed, the longer thou goest on to harden thine heart against the word, there is less hope that thou wilt be humbled by afflictions. Dare not to encourage yourselves, and harden your hearts against repentance, by hopes and purposes that when sickness comes, and death looks thee in the face, then thou wilt repent. No, no! the longer thou hardenest thyself against the word, the less hope there is that thine heart will be broken by afflictions. But some hope there is, that when the word awakens not, the rod may. But if that do not, then God be merciful unto thee! there is but one thing more, and that will certainly do it,—the unquenchable flames will awaken thee; hell will do that

which all the means under heaven cannot do: but that fire will not be physic to cure thee, but thy plague to kill thy soul for ever.

The afflictions of this life are God's physic for the recovery of thy soul. O take this cup at the hand of the Lord,—take this physic for thy soul. But what is it to take this medicine, so as it may be recovering physic?

i. Submit to afflictions when God lays them on.—Be patient and content that the Lord should afflict thee. Do not fret or murmur at the afflicting hand of God. Some froward patients,—if their physician be forced to give any harder physic, it will not go down: they fret and fume against the physician, as if he were cruel; and will not submit to take what he offers them. Be patient under the hand of God, and submit to whatever he lays upon thee.

ii. Consider thine afflictions.—“*In the day of adversity consider.*” (Eccles. vii. 14.) Affliction is a considering time. Sinners, you will not consider now, but you may have time enough to consider afterwards. You will neither consider what you do: “*They consider not that they do evil.*” (Eccles. v. 1.) Nor will you consider what the Lord speaks to you. You hear our words that we speak from the Lord; but we cannot persuade you to consider them. “*Consider what we say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.*” (2 Tim. ii. 7.) Think over the words that you hear: it is a miserable plague that hath seized upon your hearts,—this inconsideration,—which hinders you from profiting by the word, and holds you under your senselessness and hardness of heart. Think of what you hear; think what a wretched case the word declares you to be in. When you hear, “*He that committeth sin is of the devil;*” (1 John iii. 8;) “*If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;*” (Rom. viii. 13;) “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;*” (John iii. 3;) when you hear such words as these, then consider, then think with yourself, What a word have I heard to-day? Am not I concerned in it? Was not this word spoken to me? Am not I one that committeth sin? Do not I live after the flesh? Was I ever regenerated, or born again? What then? Why then, think farther, Is it

nothing to be of the devil? Is everlasting death nothing? Is it nothing to be shut out of the kingdom of God? Awaken, O my sleepy soul: yet break, and melt, and tremble!—O mine hardened heart, awaken, escape for thy life; there is but a step betwixt thee and everlasting death! Consider this now, whilst the day of adversity comes not: but if thou shouldst be so unwise as not to consider at present, yet at least in the day of thy distress consider. Then think how little the word hath done to the breaking and awakening of thee: what a stock, what a senseless stone, hath it left thee! Then think,—Now God is using one means more to cure me of this sleepy hardened heart; God hath laid this sickness upon me, or this poverty upon me, to humble me and awaken me: and now I am come to my last remedy,—if affliction, if distress, if sickness, if the sight of death and the grave, do not work upon me, nor cause the word which I have heard to work upon me, what then? Why, then I am undone for ever! I am within a step of the pit, just dropping in! then this lost soul of mine will be past recovery for ever!

O, sinner, how does this word sit upon your heart? Are not you greatly concerned in it? Does not thy life lie at stake, thy soul lie at stake, upon thy considering or slighting this warning? O consider! let present consideration prevent the great necessity of sickness consideration, of death-bed consideration. At least, when you shall come to be in distress, when pains shall come upon you, or poverty come upon you, or death make its approach to you, then remember the warning of this day: "*In the day of adversity consider.*"

iii. Take your physician's counsel, and follow his rules.—Physicians, beside their medicines, usually give rules to their patients for their well-ordering themselves; and these rules they must observe, or they are never likely to recover. There are these three rules, which ordinarily physicians give, which our great Physician of souls gives also to them that will be recovered by him.

(*i.*) Keep a good diet.—(*ii.*) Use good exercise.—(*iii.*) Take heed against taking cold.

(*i.*) Keep a good diet.—Abstain from all such things as

The Physician's Advice

will nourish and feed your disease. What is it that hath brought thee to this wretched pass? that hath made thee this sick and miserable soul? Thou hast been with the prodigal, who "*would fain have filled his belly with the husks;*" (Luke xv. 16;) thou hast been with Israel, "*feeding on ashes;*" (Isa. xliv. 20;) thou hast been with Ephraim, "*feeding on wind.*" (Hosea xii. 1.) These husks, and ashes, and wind, have been all thy poor soul hath been feeding upon: the vanities of this world, the lust and the pleasures, the carnal delights and the profits of this world, these are but windy food for thy soul,—these are the very ashes and husks, that have filled thee with such sore diseases. Thou hast fed thine heart so long with these carnal things,—thy soul hath been eating these ashes, and drinking this wind so long, that it is even turned into ashes and wind; it is become an earthly soul, a fleshly soul, a vain frothy soul: and never think to be recovered to a better case, till thou feed upon better food. Wouldest thou be recovered, and get thee a new heart and a new soul? Then abstain from thy old feeding: "*abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.*" (1 Peter ii. 11.) "*Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*" (Rom. xiii. 14.) "*Deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts.*" (Titus ii. 12.) My meaning plainly is this:—If ever you would recover, allow not your fleshly appetites the liberty as formerly; come off from your carnal pleasures, which have been such a bond to you; come off from your carnal companions; drink no more with the drunken, run not with them to their excess of riot; no more such vain sportings and revellings; not in chambering and wantonness, not in riot and drunkenness. Come off from this greedy worldly life; feed not your souls upon your lands, or your monies, or your trades: though you must have something of these for your bodies, yet feed not your hearts with them. Set not your hearts upon them: that is the advice of the Psalmist,—"*If riches increase,*" or whether they do increase or no, "*set not your heart upon them.*" (Psalm lxii. 10.) Let not your souls be drudges to your flesh, to gather in provision for it; nor let them feed with your flesh at the same trough.

You have better things for your souls to feed upon ; you have God to feed on, you have the blood of Christ, the covenant of grace, the hope of salvation, the joys of the Spirit, the pleasures of eternity, the bread that comes down from heaven, the wine that makes glad the city of God : let these be the food of your souls ; feed your thoughts upon them. Think often of God, of his infinite goodness and grace,—of his eternal treasures, and everlasting pleasures ; think of Christ, what he hath done for you, what he hath purchased for you ; how he hath loved you, and washed you in his blood, and saved you by his death. Feed your affections on God, and his glory to come ; feed your desires upon him : let this be your voice,—“ *The desire of my soul is to thy name.*” (Isa. xxvi. 8, 9.) Enlarge your desires : here you cannot be too greedy, and of too eager an appetite. Delight yourselves in the Lord ; get the savour and relish of things spiritual ; taste the pleasures of religion ; taste the sweetness of Christianity. Do not only spend now and then a sudden thought upon God, and the things above ; but live in such frequent and serious meditation, that you may get down something of the sweetness and fatness of heaven, and digest holy meditations into holy affections. Never count you have thought of God to any purpose, till you can love and taste, and get out good nourishment for your souls, by which you may thrive and flourish, and with which you may be so delighted, as to wean you from the love and lusts of this world.

Believe it, friends, as loath as you are to let go your pleasant morsels, the stolen waters of your own cisterns ; as hard as you find it to diet your souls, so as to deny yourselves the pleasures and contentments of a worldly fleshly life ; as strongly as your hearts lust after ease, and after the world, and the contentments thereof ; get but once to be so inwardly acquainted with religion, as to taste the pleasure thereof, and you will be able to despise this carnal life, and all its advantages, and wonder at yourselves that ever you should find contentment in such a life as you have lived.

And now your souls are like to flourish amain, when

you are come to this once, to disrelish your old delights, and to feed your thoughts and your affections on things above; and to forbear, and come off from the love, and lusts, and companions, and pleasures of this world: then you will live, and thrive, and flourish, in the house of the Lord, and grow up before him as his peculiar children whom the Lord hath saved.

The sum of this direction I shall give you in short, in these three particulars:—If ever you would recover, First, Abstain from that carnal worldly life in which hitherto you have lived. Second, Abstain from those carnal companions in whose converse you have delighted. Third, Delight yourselves in God; feed your thoughts and affections upon things above.

(ii.) Use good exercise.—Stir yourselves out of your lazy humours, and keep doing. Idleness breeds disease: exercise will help to cure. Particularly exercise yourselves, First, To prayer. Second, To repentance. Third, To keeping a good conscience.

First. Exercise yourselves to prayer.—The prayer of the faithful “*shall save the sick* :” (James v. 15 :) the sick soul, as well as the sick body. Prayer is a stirring exercise, that, if performed as it ought, sets all the powers of the soul on work: it is a striving with God, it is a wrestling with God, it is the lifting up of the heart, and the pouring out the soul to God. When thou settest thyself to praying, it is both a sign that thy recovery is begun, and a hope it will be perfected. Set yourselves to praying; sinners, stir up yourselves to prayer. “*There is none that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.*” (Isa. lxiv. 7.) Pray, and stir up yourselves in prayer. It is not sleepy, lazy, cold, formal praying, but stirring prayer, that must do the cure. Stir up your desires in prayer: be passionate and affectionate seekers. Stir up your fears in prayer: consider, What, if I should not prevail? What, if the cry of my sins should be louder than the cry of my prayers? I come for the pardon of my sins; I come for power against sin: I am begging my life, and the saving my soul from going down into the pit; my very life, my soul, lies at stake: if God should not hear me, I am lost for ever! Awaken, O my

soul, and pour forth strong cries : bow thyself with thy might before the Lord !

Plead with God, poor sinner, for that poor miserable soul of thine ; plead with him upon his mercies, upon his bowels, upon his promises, upon the blood of Christ. Take unto thee words,—Lord, I am a miserable sinful soul : I am a lost creature, I am sick unto death, I am bound in the chain of my sins, and cannot get loose : I am a blind, hardened, defiled creature : these eyes must be opened, this heart must be broken, this filth and pollution must be washed away, or I shall be swallowed up of the pit. Where are thy bowels, O Lord ? Art thou a God of pity, and hast thou no pity for me ? Where is thy promise, Lord ? Thou hast said, “ *Ask, and you shall have ; seek, and you shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* ” To whom hast thou spoken this word ? Is it not to me as well as to others ? Where is the blood of Christ ? Doth it not speak for sinners ? Doth it not make intercession for transgressors ? It doth, Lord : thou hast said it doth. And what doth this blood speak ? Lord, forgive this poor sinner that comes to thee for pardon ! Lord, purge him with thy blood ! Lord, heal him with thy blood ! Lord, give him that new heart and life which he comes for !—O, doth this precious blood speak thus for me, and wilt thou not hear ?

Sinners, if ever you would be recovered, set upon this exercise, and keep to it. Go to God this night : be with him again to-morrow morning, and again in the evening, and every day as duly as the day comes. Go alone, and retire into the presence of God ; fall upon your knees, and pour forth your souls in your requests to him. Beware you neither neglect it, and beware you do not trifle with it : do not deceive yourselves with the shadow or image of prayer, instead of prayer. Consider, thou art upon a matter of life and death, when thou goest to prayer ; and let that awaken and stir up all thy powers in it.

Friends, I doubt either that you do not pray, or that it is but mock-praying, that too many of you satisfy yourselves withal. O what pitiful, hasty, short, dead praying is it, that thou satisfiest thyself with ! Trace thyself into thy praying corners ; consider how seldom thou art there, how

quickly thou hast done, how miserably thou shufflest over thy duties, without life or affection! What is this but mock-prayer? Will such praying recover thy lost soul? No: thou seest it will not. Thou art the same man, of the same spirit, running the same course, from one week to another, from one year to another, without any change for the better. It may be said of such praying, as it was said of the false prophets' preaching, "*They heal the hurt of my people slightly.*" (Jer. vi. 14.) Slight praying is attended but with slight healing: something it seems to do,—it skins over the wound that it smart not for the time; it keeps people quiet for the time, but it will never work a thorough cure. Your wound is deeper, your disease is eaten into your flesh and bone, to your heart and soul; and your medicine must go as deep as your disease. There must be deep sighs and groans, and deep desires, that must come up from the bottom of your hearts, or they will never reach the bottom of your disease. Be ashamed of your slightness, be ashamed of your folly, that you should ever think that God would help you the sooner, for such trifling and mocking prayers.

O pray, and exercise yourselves in prayer! Stir up all within you to do this work: look to yourselves. I am afraid that this duty, which is a means of recovery, may prove the loss of your souls: I am afraid lest the Lord, the jealous God that will not be mocked,—I am afraid that he may damn you for your prayers,—your trifling, mocking prayers. Dare not to trifle any longer; dare not, for thy life, that the Lord ever again meet thee in thy closet, meet thee on thy knees, with nothing but the sacrifice of fools,—a few heartless words upon thy lips. Beloved, I can hardly pass over this word thus,—there being so much weight lying upon it, and yet there being so much hardness of heart under this soul-deceiving and soul-damning practice of shuffling in prayer. What say you? Have I said enough yet? Are you yet made sensible how much you are, many of you, concerned in this word? Are you yet sensible how greatly guilty you are of this miserable hypocrisy? Will all that I have said do, to bring you to be serious and in good earnest, in every prayer you

make? Are you come to this,—Well, I hope I shall mock God no more; I hope I shall trifle in prayer no more! Are you resolved to put your hearts to it, and to try what you can do, and never leave trying till you are come to it,—to make every prayer, one of the most serious and hearty exercises of your life? Then would there be hope of recovery out of all your diseases.

Second. Exercise yourselves to repentance.—Repentance signifies a change,—a change of the mind originally; so those two words, by which it is expressed in Scripture, signify *post factum sapere*; after we have played the fool by sin, to come to be wise,—so wise as to see our folly,—to see our folly so as to grieve for it,—and so to grieve, *ut corrigere*, to amend, and do so no more. This change is ordinarily brought on by convulsions and troublesome commotions in the heart: there is a sorrow that works this repentance. “*Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation.*” (2 Cor. vii. 10.) This repentance is not despatched at once, but is carried on and perfected by degrees. Repentance is a grace, and an exercise. A grace it is, as it is given us of God, through Jesus Christ,—“*To give repentance unto Israel,*” &c.: (Acts v. 31:) and exercise, as it respects our own acts, which this grace causeth us to put forth,—“*This self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what desire, what zeal, what revenge!*” (2 Cor. vii. 11.) Get the grace of repentance, and live in the daily exercise thereof.

First. Keep your minds working, to maintain the change that is begun.—Have you seen the folly of sin, and the misery of sin, and how much better it is to turn and come from it to holiness? Are you come to be of this judgment, that you were mad to follow the devil, and your lusts;—that you could never have lived in such a state, and gone on in such a course as you have, unless you had been mad men? Are you gotten into so good a mind? Keep you in it. Exercise your thoughts; cast an eye back upon your former evils, and that which God hath made known to you of the misery of them. Think often what it is to be a lost soul, a captive to the devil! Think what a fool,

what a beast thou wast, whilst thou livedst such a proud, and covetous, and carnal, sensual, lascivious, and sottish life; and by such thoughts make thyself as odious to thyself as thou canst: get too a loathing and abominating of thy evil ways. This is that which is promised: "*They shall loath themselves for the evils they have committed.*" (Ezek. vi. 9.)

Get this self-loathing by studying and remembering what thou wast, and re-opening all thine old sores,—that foolish, filthy heart and life of thine: hereby work thyself to this loathing, and maintain a constant disgust and dislike of thy former state. Art thou not in so good a mind, as to hate thyself for thy sin? Be never reconciled to it, so as to think good thoughts of thy evil ways, as long as thou livest.

Second. Exercise your affections.—Your sorrow for sin, your fear of sin, your indignation and anger against sin, your desire after power and victory over it. Keep these penitent affections working; maintain that godly sorrow, and fear, and indignation; keep your sorrow alive, keep your fears working, and your indignation burning against your iniquities. Let these zealous passions and affections against sin, be so raised, as never to be allayed; let the fire of your holy jealousy be so kindled, as never to be quenched; let the thoughts of the evil and odiousness of sin, be the fuel to keep that holy fire burning, and the bellows to blow it up into a greater flame.

Third. Exercise your care and consideration how you may complete and confirm your recovery.—The word, it may be, is but yet begun with you; you do but begin to be wise, begin to be sober and serious; there is many a good and hopeful beginning goes back, and comes to nothing: live in a daily care of reforming and amending farther what hath been amiss. The top of repentance standeth in amendment. If you should see your sins to be foolish, and odious never so much; if you should be grieved and ashamed of yourselves for them; if the thoughts of the course you have lived should make you afraid, and set you trembling over your old wonted state and way; if you do not amend,—that is no repentance. If you should say,

I hate sin, and hate myself for it; I hate myself for this pride, I hate myself for this covetousness, I hate myself for this frowardness; and yet you have not the power to resist it, and come off from it,—you sorrow and sin, you fear and sin, you are angry with yourself for sin, and yet go on,—this is no repentance. “*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous,*” &c. (Isa. lv. 7.)

The top of repentance stands in amendment, and the amendment of repentance must be completing every day. “*If ye thoroughly amend your ways, if ye thoroughly execute judgment,*” &c., “*then will I cause you to dwell in the land.*” (Jer. vii. 5, 7.) It is not a half recovery, a partial amendment, but a perfect recovery, that must be in your eye. There is a great difference betwixt these two,—being upon recovery, and being recovered. Are you upon recovery? It is well you are; it is more than the most of sinners are: there is not the least sign of recovery, there is not the least sign of amendment, there are nothing but death-tokens upon them. Sinners, I doubt this may be many of your cases,—you are not so much as beginning to recover: your disease is still in its strength, and growing upon you; you are not amending, but you are hardening daily in your sins; going on to have less sense, and so less hope of a cure. But art thou, O sinner, art thou upon recovery? It is well thou art: but let not that satisfy thee, that thou art upon the recovering hand; but get thee to be recovered. And this is that you are to be exercising yourself in, to get you to be on the mending hand every day. Labour to grow better and better: not only to get a deeper sense of sin, but to get more power over sin, more victory over your evil hearts, more contempt of the world and its temptations, more scorn of your carnal companions, and more indignation against a carnal sensual life, and more firmness and resolvedness of heart, to have done with every evil and vain way, and the temptation to it. I say the temptation to it,—for whatever opposition there seems to be of the heart against sin, yet if there be a venturing upon temptation, if thou thinkest thou hatest drunkenness, or a jolly vain life, and yet will be thrusting

in amongst those that are such ; if thou sayest thou hatest this worldly-mindedness, and yet art never well but when thou art greedily heaping up what should feed thy worldly disease,—never talk of hating the sin : if thou fear not, if thou shun not the temptation, thou still lovest the sin.

Well, sinners, set your hearts upon a perfect amendment, and keep yourselves in such a constant exercise of repentance, that you may amend more and more every day. Consider, is it better with thee to-day than it was yesterday ? or at least, is it better with thee this year than it was last year, or some years ago ? Is it better, or is it worse ? O, art thou in the same case ? What hope hast thou to be recovered, if there be no amendment all this while !

To provoke you to the present and constant exercising yourselves to repentance, I will propose some questions to you.

Question 1. What do you think of your former state, and your ways hitherto ? Is it well with you ? Are you not lost souls ? and your carnal ways, are they not the ways of perdition ? Have ye lived like understanding men ? Do ye think ye have ? Will you say, I have done wisely in following wine and strong drink, in following my companions and my pleasures ? I have dealt wisely to live such a covetous and worldly life ? I should have been a fool to have been a Christian, or a convert ; to have left all and have followed Christ, from my first time ? You have lived a fleshly and worldly life, you cannot deny that : but let me ask you, as the Apostle did the Romans, "*What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?*" (Romans vi. 21.) Are you come so far towards repentance as to be ashamed of your former folly ? What fruit have you ? What is there now remaining to you, as the fruit of your former ways ? O, I have some good fruit : I hope I have lived a worldly life, I have got the world about me : I have got me an estate, and have become a rich man : I should have been poor enough, if I had hearkened to Christ, and come back from the world sooner : this house is the fruit, this money is the fruit, these lands are the fruit, of my labours. Would praying,

and repenting, and forsaking the world, ever have brought me to such an estate as now I have? And do you yet ask me what fruit have ye of your worldliness?

Answer. 1. But are these the fruits you can satisfy yourselves with? Are these the fruits you can bless yourselves with? Will these estates answer for you to your Judge, and make way for you into the everlasting kingdom? Will this be a good plea for entrance into heaven:—Set open the door, for here comes a rich man, a monied man, a landed man: let him have entrance into the everlasting kingdom? Friends, what you have thus gotten will sink you, and drown you in perdition and destruction, but will never help you to glory: and this is the good fruit you boast of,—that you have gotten such weights about your necks, as will drown you in the pit!

But, 2. What fruit have you of your ways that have lived at ease, and in pleasure, in idleness or wantonness, or excess of riot, in sporting and laughing, and carnal jollity? What is become of all the pleasures of your life? What fruit is there remaining of all thy crackling thorns? Are they not all burned to ashes, and vanished away as a dream?

3. Have all your former ways done anything to the recovering of your lost souls? Have not they left you sons of perdition; nay, are you not become seven times more the children of hell by these practices than you were by nature? Thou wert naturally a child of wrath; (Ephes. ii. 3;) and you have, by practice, been children of disobedience; (as verse 2;) and hath your disobedience delivered you from wrath?

I say therefore again, What do you think of yourselves, and your ways? The judgment of God, you see what it is: you are a child of disobedience, and a child of wrath. And what is your judgment? What are your own thoughts of yourselves? Does not your judgment and your conscience tell you, Sure it is an evil case that I am in? No wise man would ever stay a minute longer in such a state or way. Have you come so far towards repentance as to change your mind? Are there any of you of better minds than you have been? Is this now your mind and your

settled judgment,—It would be good for me to repent, and come about to God? Have you any mind to Christ, any mind to godliness, and serious Christianity?

Question 2. Will you continue in your former state and way, or will you endeavour for recovery?—If you say you have a mind to be a convert, and to become a new man, will you set your hearts to it? will you exercise your thoughts about it? Will you set to praying for repentance, to resisting and striving against your old sins? Will you go on as before, or will you come back? Who is there among you that hath yet the heart to say, O, I have done with my old ways, I have done with my old companions, I have done with the world, I have done with this fleshly life; I am ashamed, I am afraid, I repent that I have lived such a life hitherto! The Lord change my heart; the Lord help me to change my way! What say you, Christians? it is an important question to answer. The Lord God puts you this day to it, to be plain and downright, and in good earnest to resolve what you will do. What say you? Who of you are for repenting, and who for going on in your sins? God puts you to it, and in the name of God put yourselves to it, to give in your answer. What do you mean to do? will you hearken to the Lord, or will you yet go on to harden your hearts? Have these words so far prevailed upon you, as to bring you into a good mind? Have you a mind and purpose to return?

Question 3. Shall it suffice you to take up with the beginning of repentance, or will you make thorough-work? Shall it suffice you to set your faces towards God, or will you come home to him? "*O Israel, if thou wilt return, return unto me.*" (Jer. iv. 1.) Come not towards me, and then stay half way: but come home to me, come through to me. Repentance is despatched by degrees: first, those that were running away, are brought about to be looking and making towards God; then those that are afar off, are coming near to God; then those that are come near, do come into God; and then those that are come in, do by degrees fix and confirm their hearts upon God, that they may never go back into the way of sin.

What is it that will satisfy you? Shall it suffice you

to be looking towards God, or coming half way towards heaven? or are you for coming home, for coming into the Lord, for making sure work, for making thorough work? If you are so, for being thorough converts, this will require time, this will require pains, and constant exercising yourselves to repentance as long as you live. You must continue repenting, as long as you continue sinning: you must confirm and establish your hearts against all returns to your old state and course, as long as there is danger of relapsing. What if you should begin well, and then give off, or make a stand? What if you should lay by your sorrow for sin, lay down your fear of sin, and run into temptation to sin without fear,—if you would give off your watch and your war against sin? What do you think would become of you if you should? How would you tumble back into the pit, from which you seemed to be delivered? Do what you can, friends, to make sure work. Have you any sense of sin, and of the necessity of turning? Exercise your thoughts and your hearts upon this thing while you live. You will never whilst you live here, see to the bottom of the evil that is in sin. Hast thou by thinking, and searching, found out something of the evil of sin? Think again, search again, and thou shalt yet see greater abominations, greater malignity in it. You may as easily see to the height of heaven, or to the depth of hell, as to the bottom of sin. Sin can never be thoroughly known till God be thoroughly known. It is an abuse of God, an abuse of infinite grace, and goodness, and holiness: as often as thou sinnest, thou affrontest and abusest the God of heaven and earth. Thou thinkest it a small matter to tell a lie, or to pilfer and purloin, if it be but trifles thou stealest; but is it a small matter to abuse the Almighty God? to tread upon his authority, who hath said, *Lie not: thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet*? Is it a small matter to spit in his face, to slight his bowels, to tread upon his merey, and to throw it back upon him, and refuse it when he offers it? Such, and much more malignity is there in sin than all this; and therefore, be thinking and searching out the evil of sin, more and more as long as you live. Study much the evil of

sin, and the preciousness of Christ, and give not over till you can no longer either make light of sin, or make light of Christ; and when sin is become grievous, and Christ is become precious; when sin is so grievous that you cannot bear it, when Christ is so precious that you cannot want him, that is a sign of a recovered soul: "*Unto you which believe, he is precious.*" (1 Peter ii. 7.) Where Christ is precious, it is sure, there sin is odious. O, if Christ hath once recovered you, how dear will he be to you! You will prize him in your hearts, you will love him while you live, you will be afraid how you grieve or offend him. And when you are recovered from sin, how will you look back upon it? Will you love, will you lust after your old ways again? Will you wish yourselves worldlings again, sensualists again? Will you bethink of the ease you have lost, the pleasures you have lost, the companions you have lost? Will you not thank God that you are come out from among them, and have escaped that misery that is coming upon the world? The more you live in the constant exercise of repentance, the more you will admire the recovering grace of God, and the more you will abhor returning to folly.

Repentance is your recovery: if God give you repentance, you may recover; and your continuing in the exercise of repentance is your maintaining, and perfecting, and confirming your recovery. You are not so far off from the state of sin, but your continued exercise of repentance will get you farther off daily. Your repentance is your obtaining sure ground; and your continued repentance is your standing your ground: your giving off at your repenting work will be your relapse; and it may be into a worse case than before: "*Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.*" (John v. 14.) Behold, thou art made whole! O what a word is that! How do you think that poor impotent man, that had been so thirty-eight years, was ravished at that word? What if the Lord should now speak the word to any sinner among you, that had been even astonished with the sense of his sin and his guilt? that had lain as long at the ordinances, as the poor man at the pool, expecting and hoping

a saving change, and could find none? If Christ should come to thee this day, and say, "*Behold, thou art whole,*" thy sins are forgiven, and thy soul is cleansed from them:—if that word should be spoken to thee this day, how would thy heart leap for joy! What should we hear from thee, but praise and thanksgiving? Well, but yet consider the words that follow,—"*Sin no more,*" stand thy ground, "*lest a worse thing come to thee.*" Thy case hath been very sad formerly; but sad as it hath been, look to find it worse if thou return to folly: "*God will speak peace, but let them not turn again to folly.*" (Psalm lxxxv. 8.) At their peril let them look to it, that they do not return. But of this, more in the next.

Now, sinners, will you at last be persuaded to set upon this work of repenting? Will you say you cannot? Why then, you must die of your disease—die eternally. But why can you not? O, it is a painful life, it is contrary to me: I have found such ease, and such pleasure, and such gain in mine old ways, that I cannot part with them. What, not for the saving of thy life? Is thine ease better than Christ? Are thy gains more worth than thy soul? Wilt thou to hell rather than turn? As sure as thou livest, thither thou must, if thou repent not:—"*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*" (Luke xiii. 3.) God hath said, "*The soul that sinneth it shall die;*" (Ezekiel xviii. 20;) and God will never repent of that word as to thee, unless thou repent of thy sins. What, art thou resolved for hell? Art thou resolved to sacrifice that flesh and those bones of thine to the fury of the devil? Art thou a captive to the devil, and wilt thou never recover out of his snares? Shall he carry thee with him to his home? Shall he that hath had the leading of thee, have the burning of thee? O, why will ye die? Turn and live: count upon it, there is but one way with you,—every one of you, either turn or die!

Third. Exercise yourselves to the keeping a good conscience.—"*Herein do I exercise myself.*" (Acts xxiv. 16.) This is an hard exercise, and will hold us in continual work. There are many things required to the keeping a good conscience, all which must be well looked to. Amongst others,

First. Get a good conscience ; or get conscience recovered from those evils it labours under.—There are two special evils in and upon conscience :—(1st.) Guilt. (2d.) Guile.

(1st.) Guilt.—There is guilt upon the conscience : every sin leaves guilt behind it. The whole world is “*become guilty before God* ;” (Rom. iii. 19 ;) because the whole world are sinners, or subject to the judgment of God. But then there is guilt upon the man, and guilt upon the conscience. There are some sins that leave guilt upon the man, but do not immediately leave guilt upon the conscience : as sins of ignorance, which leave guilt upon the man, but not always upon the conscience ; because such sins conscience does not, nor can, take notice of, and so they cannot be called sins against conscience. Guilt there is upon conscience,—First, When through remissness or neglect, it does not take notice of them, nor charge the soul to take heed of them. Second, When, though conscience does know sin to be sin, and those particular acts, that I am tempted to, to be sinful acts ; yet lust prevails to bring us upon the commission of them against conscience. Thou knowest that lying is a sin : thy conscience tells thee so, and yet thou wilt lie. Thou knowest that drunkenness, that defrauding, that profaning the Sabbath, that neglecting to pray, and to hear, are sins : thy conscience tells thee they are ; and yet thou wilt lie, or be drunk, and work or travel upon the Lord’s day, neglect to pray, &c. This leaves a guilt upon thy conscience. O how great, O how dreadful guilt is there upon the consciences of many of us ! How many bills of indictment will thy conscience have, to bring forth against thee before thy Judge ! The guilt of neglecting Christ, the guilt of hardening thy heart against mercy ; besides all the guilt of thine oaths, of thy drunkenness, and of thy covetousness, of thy lying, and stealing, and scoffing,—all this guilt lies upon thee ; and this is one thing that conscience must be recovered from ere it can be a good conscience.

(2d.) Guile, or falsehood, or treachery of conscience.—It will juggle and deal deceitfully ; it will dispense with, or give allowance to, sin ; it will connive and wink at iniquity.

Some sins which can be better spared, it resists; others, such as interest or inclination lead more strongly to, it lets them pass, and will not see them to be sin; and therefore dares not examine whether they be sin or no. This is a guileful conscience. It is true of Christians what is said of Nathaniel: "*An Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.*" (John i. 47.) "*Blessed is the man in whose spirit there is no guile.*" (Psalm xxxii. 2.) This is a good conscience, that is plain, and honest, and faithful. "*We trust ye have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.*" (Heb. xiii. 18.)

Now these being the diseases of conscience,—guilt and guile,—from these we must be recovered; and the recovery must be wrought by blood and water. By the blood of Christ:—"How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience?" (Heb. v. 14.) And by water also; by the water of sanctification, and by the water of repentance: penitent tears have their use to the washing of conscience. Sinners, take heed! have no guilt upon your conscience. Have you no guilt in your conscience? O, how dreadfully guilty, O, how miserably guileful, hath that conscience of thine been! Get your consciences purged; the blood of Christ to be sprinkled upon them. Draw water,—so the pouring forth penitent tears is expressed,—"*They drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day.*" (1 Sam. vii. 6.) Draw water, sinners; weep before the Lord for your sins; and this will be the washing your consciences from the guilt and guile that is upon them.

Second. Keep conscience working.—Though method would require that I speak to this, of keeping conscience, under the next general,—the keeping of the heart,—yet I choose rather to speak to it here. Keep conscience working. A lazy, sleepy conscience is good for nothing: it is a stirring working conscience that does its office, that must industriously be maintained. Conscience hath,—(1st.) An eye. (2d.) A book. (3d.) A tongue. (4th.) A sceptre.

(1st.) An eye.—The eye of conscience must be kept open. The eye of conscience is even as the eye of God: it may be said of conscience in its measure, as of God,—"*Thou*

knowest my down sitting and uprising, thou understandest my thoughts, and art acquainted with all my ways." (Psalm cxxxix. 2, 3.) The eye of conscience beholds our inward thoughts, all things are naked and open, even before that conscience with which we have to do; and this is something you have to keep you doing,—to keep the eye of conscience open. Let not conscience wink at your follies; let it see and observe whatever you do.

(2d.) A book.—A register or book of records, where it writes down what it sees:—" *The sin of Judah is written; it is graven upon the table of the heart.*" (Jer. xvii. 1.) The meaning there is, it hath entered into their hearts; it hath corrupted and eaten into their hearts; there are the scars and impressions of it upon them. Their iniquities have marked them,—and marked them in their very hearts for vile and ungodly ones. This graving of sin upon the heart denotes the heart's defilement,—the corrupting of the heart; but then there is a writing for remembrance, a writing of *scores*, or books of account; and thus the sins of men are written in the book of conscience. Now this also must be looked to, that conscience be faithful, and book down all our sins; that they may be remembered by us, and repented of.

The book of conscience will be written, whether men will or no: if conscience will be negligent, and will not write down its own faults, God will do it; and will write down all our sins: if we mark not, God will mark them,—"*Thine iniquity is marked before me.*" (Jer. ii. 22.) If we record not, God will record them. What conscience writes, conscience may read and remember; but what God writes, upon the neglect of conscience, sinners cannot read, or remember now; but there it shall all be seen at the great day of accounts, when the book shall be opened, and read before angels and men.

Sinners, what is there written in those books respecting you? Are your sins written there? Hath conscience kept a record of them? It is well if it have: look into that book, read over and remember all your ways; go and ask thy conscience if thou hast not been a liar, if thou hast not been a swearer, a drunkard, a covetous man, a

flesh-pleaser: ask thy conscience if it hath not been so. How many have been thy lies, how many have been thine oaths; how many drunken 'bouts, how many rioting days, how many greedy and covetous practices, hast thou been guilty of? Look into that book in thy bosom: if conscience hath been faithful, there thou mayest read and remember, and so come to be humbled. But if conscience hath not noted these things, but hath been asleep, and let thee alone to run thy course, without its keeping an account, God hath written down all. Though thou hast forgotten what thou hast been, though thou hast forgotten or hast taken no notice of what thou hast done, yet God hath his book of remembrance against thee; thine iniquities are all marked before him: "*These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; but I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thee.*" (Psalm 1. 21.) The Lord stood by and saw thee, when thou wast in thy cups; the Lord hearkened and heard all thine oaths, and thy lies; and though he kept silence, and let thee alone for the time, and said little to reprove or affright thee; yet thou shalt see, and know, that he saw thee wherever thou wast, and marked what thou hast done: thou shalt know it by this, that he will hereafter reprove thee, and set all thy sins in order before thee. O what a fearful sight will that be, when thou shalt have the black roll of all the wickedness that thou hast done in thy life, at once presented to thy view! Now you would be ready to say, I know nothing by myself; or, 'Tis no great matter at least: thou hast but a few things against thyself, and those few thou countest small. But when God shall bring forth the whole roll, and force thee to read every line, and to every sin its proper colour, then shalt thou see every one of thy sins as so many devils to torment thee for ever. Sinner, how dost thou think thou shalt look in that day? How will thy face grow pale, and thy countenance be changed, and thy bones tremble at such a horrid sight of all thy sins at once! O prevent this misery by leading conscience to be faithful: let conscience keep its book open, and write down all thy ways, that there thou mayest read them at present, and remember

them in order to thy repentance, and their being blotted out by the blood of the Lamb.

(3d.) A tongue.—Conscience is called by a proverb, the preacher in the bosom. How shall this preacher preach, if he hath not a tongue to speak by? God be merciful to those congregations which have dumb priests; and to those sinners that have dumb consciences. How long may poor congregations sit under a dumb priest, ere they hear anything to purpose, either of their duty or their faults? They may be blind and ignorant souls, and never hear one word of instruction, or of the danger of their ignorance; they may be without Christ, and without God in the world, and so may continue to their dying day, and never hear one word to bring them to Christ, or turn them to God. They may be liars, drunkards, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, or what they will; and whatever they be, they never hear a word to bring them to repentance. They may live without prayer, reading, or so much as thinking upon God, or their everlasting state; and not a word spoken to bring them to these necessary duties! And just thus sadly it fares with people that are under dumb consciences. They may do what they will, be as wicked as they please, and conscience lets them alone. Sinner, dost thou not find this to be true, in thy case? Thou canst go all thy days without serious prayer; no prayer in secret, no prayer in the family: thou canst live in this respect, like a very heathen: and thou canst lie, and swear, and drink, and scoff, and be covetous; and what says conscience to all this?—Not a word. Thy conscience may say in its wickedness, as God said in his righteousness, “*These things hast thou done, and I kept silence.*” (Psalm l. 20.) Of such consciences it may be said, as concerning David toward his son Adonijah: “*His father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so?*” (1 Kings i. 6.) Men’s consciences will not displease them, will not displease their lusts; but will let them alone, and say nothing to them, good or bad. How often dost thou hear of thy conscience? When did it check thee, or reprove thee, or warn thee? When didst thou hear such a word within thee, “*How can I do this great wickedness,*

and sin against God?" (Gen. xxxix. 9.) With what conscience can I be thus false, or fraudulent, or froward? With what conscience can I keep such vain and evil company? With what conscience can I live without prayer, or anything of the worship of God in my house? Is there any conscience in this lying, or promise-breaking, or deceitful dealing? Is there any conscience in this idle careless life, to live thus in the neglect of God and my soul? When didst thou hear such a word within thee? Thou hast a conscience, such as it is, but it hath lost its tongue, and will not reprove thee, nor warn thee, but let thee alone to follow thy lust and humours without control; and in what a woeful case art thou, that art under such a dumb conscience? We read that Christ, in great wrath said to his disciples concerning the Pharisees, "*Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind;*" (Matt. xv. 14;)—let them alone, say nothing to them. Hath Christ said thus to conscience, concerning thee? Let him alone, say not a word to him: let him be blind while he will; let him be hardened while he will; speak no more to him to awaken him? Is not this a dreadful case?

O friends, pray for a faithful conscience, that will not cease to warn you from day to day! Do not muzzle the mouth of conscience: encourage your consciences to speak to you, by giving them free leave to do so; yea, by asking and inquiring of conscience, What sayest thou to the course I am going on in? If I ask my will, or my affections, or my lusts concerning these vain ways, they are all pleased, and like it that I go on thus. But what sayest thou, O my conscience? Is it good that I be a worldling, or a sensualist, or a liar, or unjust, or unmerciful? Is this as God would have it? Is this the life God is well pleased with? Ask conscience such questions, and put conscience to it, to give in an answer; and then there is hope it will speak. And hear what conscience says. If conscience speak and speak, and men will not hear, this is the way to stop its mouth: a deaf ear will make a dumb conscience. If conscience speak, and it cannot be heard, if the warnings and *items* of conscience be borne down by lust and appetite, this is another way to put conscience to silence, that it may speak no more.

Sinners, you have been hitherto consulting with flesh and blood, taking counsel of sense and appetite, and carnal interest; and whilst conscience hath kept silence, you see in what way you have gone on. Would you have conscience speak, or have it hold its peace? Will you henceforth inquire of conscience, what it does in earnest judge of your present life? what it does judge best for you henceforth to do? Will you hear conscience when it speaks? Will you be guided and governed by conscience? I will not henceforth please myself, but will endeavour to please God and conscience, so as to live a conscientious life: that is the best way to recover thy conscience,—to recover its speech. Thy conscience is ready to die, if it become speechless. When sick men are speechless, we count them dying. That conscience of thine, that hath so long lain speechless, it will die if thou take not some sudden course to recover its speech. O get you a stirring lively conscience, that will not hold its peace.

(4th.) A sceptre.—Conscience is to be the governor in the soul. God hath said to conscience as he said to Christ, "*Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*" (Psalm cx. 2.) Thou livest in the midst of enemies. All within,—the carnal mind, the carnal will, the carnal affections, every lust of the heart, all these are enemies to conscience: but God says, Conscience, be thou ruler in the midst of thine enemies. Those that are under the government of God, he puts under the government of conscience; as Isaac said to Esau, when he came for a blessing, after Jacob had been blessed before him,—I have, says he, made him thy lord, and thou shalt be his servant; though thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck. So God says to the heart, and all within it,—I have made conscience your Lord: you will break its yoke from off your neck, you will all conspire to rebel, and to resist conscience,—to blind, and to muzzle, and destroy it; (lust is the deadly enemy of conscience;) but yet I have said to conscience, Be thou ruler in the midst of thine enemies.

All the world is governed by God, or the devil; and both these governors have their viceroys. Conscience is

the viceroy of God, and lust is the viceroy of the devil. Now these two viceroys contend who shall have the dominion, who shall have the government in the soul. Lust cannot endure that conscience should bear any sway. Carnal, earthly-minded men, will rather mock at conscience, than be governed by it. Lust will not endure that conscience should bear the sway; and conscience can never be safe or successful in its government, till lust be trodden under foot. Whilst conscience is kept as an underling, and is checked and controlled, and put to silence by lust, so long it is in an evil case. Conscience is never recovered, till it hath recovered its authority and dominion. God that hath given the dominion to conscience, and, under Christ, laid the government upon its shoulder, hath also put a sceptre into his hand, to execute its government withal; and hath given to conscience a two-fold sceptre:—

Firstly. An iron sceptre.—He hath said to it concerning sinners, obstinate sinners, as he said respecting his enemies, “*Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron.*” (Rev. ii. 27.) This iron sceptre, put into the hand of conscience, hath teeth in it: hence do sinners, who will not hear the commands, sometimes feel the bitings, of conscience: the teeth of a provoked conscience will bite worse than those of a lion or bear. Thou that rebellest against conscience, that abusest and wrongest conscience, take heed of the bitings of conscience. Thy conscience is a lion; and though it be now a sleeping lion, and thou darest to play with it, or use it at thy pleasure, yet look to it, when this sleeping conscience is awakened, then thou wilt feel the teeth of this lion. As it is said of wine, “*In the end it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder;*” (Prov. xxiii. 32;) so it is true of every sin,—every sin will bite. Those carnal pleasures, those worldly gains, that look upon you with a pleasant fawning face,—all your sins and sinful pleasures, will bite like a serpent, with a poisonous deadly biting: sin will thus bite, and it bites with the teeth of conscience. O the gripes that some sinners feel,—the deadly gripes, when they fall under the teeth or talons of a sin-provoked conscience! Sinners, I warn you to take heed of slighting conscience! Come under the

dominion of conscience, let conscience govern thee, let conscience rule thee, or look for the iron sceptre to fall upon thee, the teeth whereof will bite thee as a serpent, and sting thee as an adder.

Secondly. A golden sceptre.—Conscience doth not only enforce its authority, and our submission to it, by the terrors of its iron sceptre, but it encourages submission, by the comfort of holding to us its golden sceptre. King Ahasuerus's holding out the golden sceptre to Esther, was in token of his favour, and her being accepted of the king: "*She found favour in his sight, and the king held out to her the golden sceptre.*" (Esther v. 2.) Those that find favour with conscience, (as all those that observe, and obey, and live under the government of conscience do,) conscience will hold out the golden sceptre to them; will speak peace, and speak comfortably to them: and to have conscience speak peace, (an upright conscience,) is the same as to have God speak peace: to be able to stand comfortably before conscience, is the same as to be able to stand with comfort and boldness before the face of God: "*If our heart condemn us,*" &c., (1 John iii. 20, 21,) if our hearts, our consciences, condemn us for falsehood and unfaithfulness, God will condemn us; but if our hearts condemn us not, if our conscience acquit us, and say, "*Well done, good and faithful servant,*" (Matt. xxv. 23,) thou hast been faithful; if our upright conscience acquit us, then have we confidence and boldness before God. For the comfort and the rejoicing that flow into the heart from the testimony of a good conscience, see 2 Cor. i. 12.

Friends, how would you have your conscience deal with you? Would you that it held out the golden sceptre? Would you that conscience speak peace? that conscience should say, "*Well done,*" thou hast been faithful? Would you have this testimony from conscience, that you have had your conversation in simplicity and godly sincerity? Is the peace of conscience, the joy of that peace, the sweetness, and calmness, and serenity of heart, which are the fruit of conscience speaking peace,—is this peace, is this rejoicing, of any value with you?

Whilst others are under the checks and rebukes, under

the terrors and the sting, of an abused conscience ; whilst conscience bites and worries them, with the teeth of its iron sceptre ; whilst conscience affrights and terrifies them ; whilst conscience judges them, and condemns them for following their lusts ; whilst it is so dreadful with men of an abused griping conscience ; then if you would prize, desire, and rejoice in the peace and the comfort of conscience, hearken to conscience, and be governed by conscience in all your way. If conscience but govern, it will certainly comfort you.

Therefore, *Third*. Live under the government of conscience : that is, live a conscientious life ; make conscience of your duties, and perform them ; make conscience of sin, and avoid it. Approve your hearts to your conscience in all things : be conscientious livers, and be universally conscientious. Be able to say with the Apostle, "*I have lived in all good conscience ;* (Acts xxiii. 1 ;) and "*I have a good conscience, willing in all things to live honestly.*" (Heb. xiii. 18.) To obey conscience in some things, and to rebel against it in others, is not to live a conscientious life. Be universally conscientious of every duty, of every sin.

O friends, how many are there of us, even among professors, who halt after conscience, are very lame and deceitful in our ways ! some things we do, and others we neglect ; some sins we forbear, and others we venture upon.

You that are professors, and seem in a fair way of recovery, consider how you come off here. It may be, you are afraid of gross sin ; you dare not be drunk, or swear, and curse, and blaspheme ; but are you afraid of taking the name of God in vain ?—mingling "O Lord ! O God ! O Christ," with your common and ordinary discourses ? It may be, you are afraid to be found in an alehouse, the companions and partakers with the drunken and the riotous ; but are you afraid to be found unnecessarily among the vain ones, and to become vain with those that are vain ? It may be, you are afraid to cozen and cheat ; your consciences will not suffer you to do that ; but do you not covet, or are you inordinately eager and greedy

after the world? It may be, you dare not work or travel on the Lord's day, though some among us will venture to do that also: the conveniences for the market or the fair, and the shortening their expenses, whatever conscience says to the contrary, will put them upon this Sabbath profanation. One word by the way to such:—I remember a story told me by a reverend man, of a professor in his flock being about to travel upon the Lord's day to a fair that was to be held next day, being reprov'd of it by his minister, and asked if he thought it not a sin: Yes, I do, says he; but I have repented of it. His meaning was, he intended to travel the next Lord's day, but had repented of it already!

It is a strange kind of repentance, for a man that is going to an alehouse, first to do something that he could call repenting, and then go and commit the sin. You that are guilty, if there be any such among you, let me ask you, have you repented of your former Sabbath profanations, or have you not? If you have not repented, there is the guilt of all your former journeys of this kind still lying upon you: you are guilty to this day, guilt is never taken away without repentance.

If you say you have repented of your former practices, then I hope you mean, never while you live, to be guilty again. You have not truly repented of any sin, till you are resolved, through the grace of God, to forsake it for ever. Remember this, Unless you resolve to have done with all such journeyings hereafter, you have not repented of what is past; and if you have not repented of what is past, there is the guilt of all still lying upon you, and your souls are liable to answer for it before the judgment of God.

But thou that allowest not thyself such a liberty of working or journeying on the Lord's day, yet dost thou make conscience of sleeping, or loitering, or idling out a great part of it? It may be, thou wilt not be then found in the fields, or at thy sports, for conscience sake: but mayest thou not be found walking about the streets, or idly visiting, or vainly spending thy time with a neighbour? Though thou wilt not be abroad when thou

shouldest be in the congregation ; yet wilt thou not be out of doors when thou shouldest be teaching, or instructing, or praying with thy family ? It hath often troubled me to think how little help some poor families have from their governors, even on the day of the Lord.

It may be you will not be unjust or deceitful in your dealings ; but are you not unmerciful or uncharitable ? It may be, that you bear no rooted malice or grudge in your hearts ;—God forbid you should ; that is for the devil, rather than a Christian ;—but suppose you do not, yet it may be you do : whatever you think you may have routed malice from resting in your hearts ; but if you do not, yet you will be fretful and furious, and sour and sullen ; and can express it in bitter looks, in strangeness, and keeping your distance, in biting words, and backbiting stories ; and this conscience lets you alone in.

It may be, you are not of a vicious conversation ; but are you of a gracious conversation ? It may be, that no corrupt communication proceedeth out of your mouth,—your breath doth not stink of ribaldry, and obscene discourses ; but are you not frothy and unsavoury in your communication ? If your speech be not rotten and corrupt, yet is it “ *seasoned with salt,*” (Col. iv. 6,) that it may “ *minister grace to the hearers ?*” (Eph. iv. 29.)

It may be, you dare not neglect praying ; but will not your consciences suffer you to trifle and shuffle in prayer ? It may be, you pray, and are serious in prayer, and feel some workings of conscience, and meltings of heart, and enlargement of affection, and some sense of God and religion, whilst you are upon your knees ; but when you have done, and go out of your closet, do you not then leave your conscience behind you, your religion behind you ? Do you carry conscience into your shops, and into your fields, and to the market ? You pray as a man of conscience, and hear as a man of conscience ; but do you buy and sell, eat and drink, and converse in the world, as a man of conscience ? Take you out of duties, and may we not take you out of your religion ? What are you at other times, but even as other men ? Is this to be universally conscientious ? Can you be sincerely conscientious,

if you be not universally so? He that is not conscientious in every thing, is truly conscientious in nothing. Brethren, take heed you do not give conscience a kiss, and a kick,—kiss it, and comply with it, in the things you like, and kick at conscience when it presses too hard upon you in the things you like not. If in any thing you give conscience a kick, conscience may remember you, and give you a gripe for it another day.

O, if you would recover the authority of conscience, if you would have conscience hold out the golden sceptre to you, if you would have conscience smile upon you, if you would have true peace of conscience, and live indeed under the power of conscience, be universally conscientious; exercise yourselves to it, so as to live holily in all things, honestly in all things, and at all times. This exercise of keeping to conscience is a painful exercise: you can never live a conscientious life, unless you will be content to live a painful life,—to take pains with your hearts, to take pains with your thoughts and affections, to take pains with your tongues and all your members, to hold them close to the rule of conscience: this painful exercise will give you a heat, will beget warmth in those cold and careless hearts. The most conscientious Christians are the most warm and lively Christians; and according as you get and keep your hearts warm, so will your diseases waste, and the health of your souls return into you. Remember what I have said, If ever you would recover your lost souls, recover conscience: if ever you would recover conscience, get the guilt and the guile of conscience purged away by the blood of Christ, and water of repentance; keep the eye of conscience open; let conscience be the supervisor of all your ways; let the book of conscience be kept clear from blots and blurs; and let there be a faithful record kept there, of all your ways; let the tongue of conscience have leave to speak and warn you from day to day, and submit to its sceptre and government; be no longer governed by will, or by appetite, or by lust, or by the fashions and customs or examples of men, but be governed by conscience. Do not give conscience a kiss and a stab, hearkening to it in some things, and wounding

it in others ; but study to live in all good conscience,—on your Sabbath days, on your working days, in the house of the Lord, in your own houses, in the houses of your friends, in the field, in the market, in the matters of God, in the affairs of the world, when you are alone, when in company, when you are in good company, when you are fallen into evil company, wherever you are, whatever you are doing ; have an eye upon conscience, an ear open to conscience ; and let conscience prescribe to you, what you should do, or how you should carry it, in every affair.

iii. Beware of taking cold.—That is a special rule physicians are wont to give to the recovering patient. When persons are upon recovery of their bodily diseases, how ordinary is it, that upon a little cold they relapse, and sometimes die of their malady ! Is thy soul upon recovery ?—take heed of colds. Souls, such there are, who when they begin to be wrought upon, and are brought to any sense of religion, there appears a great heat and fervour of spirit upon them: 'tis with them as with the prophet,—“ *Thy word was in me like fire ;*” (Jer. xx. 9 ;) their love and desire, and zeal for God seem all in a flame. O what warm affections have they ! how warm in their duties, how warm in their converse ! They seem to be all life and soul ! And then after a time they grow stark cold, and little life is left in them, and some of them never recover while they live. Hath the spirit gotten an heat ? Hath the word heated thee ? Have those exercises of prayer, repentance, and keeping conscience, produced in thee a heat ? Then take heed of growing cold : keep you constant to those exercises that have begotten a heat in you. Keep in the sunshine : all your heart-warmth is begotten, and must be maintained, from above. Live in the beholding the face of God : live in the beams of the Sun of Righteousness : keep you close to God, keep you near to Christ : live in intimate communion with God. Take heed of those clouds, your sins, that will obscure the sun. (Isa. lx. 1.) Take heed of an eclipse : see that this earth do not interpose betwixt your souls and heaven. Take heed of the damp influences of the dead that you live among. We live in a cold world, a cold age : that age has overtaken us, of which Christ

prophesied, wherein "*the love of many should wax cold.*" (Matt. xxiv. 12.) Those that are grown cold themselves, will serve for nothing but to chill and damp the spirits of others. Be not unnecessarily conversant with this cold world: trust not yourselves in its company. Have you never found, how much your souls have lost by carnal correspondence? Professors, how is it with you? Do you still retain your first vigour, as when you began to be recovered? May not the Lord complain over some of us, as of Israel, "*I remember the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thine espousals.*" (Jer. ii. 2.) I remember it is a thing that is past, that now is not. Or, of Ephesus, "*Thou hast left thy first love.*" (Rev. ii. 4.) And what follows from this decay? Hence is it that we are become a company of sickly professors, of carnal professors, of earthly professors. The world hath returned upon us; the flesh hath gotten head again in us; the things that are eternal, and the influence of them, are even lost and swallowed up of things temporal; our stocks, and our business, and our trades, how have they choked up our religion?

Friends, it is matter of astonishment to consider, how very few lively Christians there are to be found among us! Thus we every one talk, What a general decay of religion there is! Has not thine own mouth complained of the coldness of this age? But whilst thou complainest of the age, how is it with thee? Art thou not sick of the same disease? Look homeward, look inward into thine own house, into thine own heart: what spirit of religion is there going in thine own family? Hast thou not by thy negligence, let all run to decay there? What life of religion is there maintained in thine own heart? Friends, feel you every man his own pulse, lay your hand every man upon his own heart, and feel how faintly it beats heavenwards. Sure, friends, if we should examine our own case, we should find enough to set us all weeping over our own decays; and we should hear that voice within us, "*Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.*" (Luke xxiii. 28.) O take heed, lest such of you, as are fallen back among the sick, do not also return

among the dead, and make your recovery again more hopeless than it was at first. You that stand, be warned by those that are fallen; stand with your loins girded, and your lights burning. And you that are fallen,—fallen to decay, fallen to a dead, and flat, and lifeless state; you that are fallen, remember whence you are fallen: remember and repent, remember and recover, strengthen the things that remain: if there be any sparks left, blow off your ashes, blow up the coals. Let the life of God, and the love of Christ, and a zeal for holiness, be again kindled in you: and if ever the Lord should recover you again, (there is great hazard whether he may, for thou mayest die of the cold thou hast taken, the consumption that hath eaten up so much of thy vitals, may be unto death, eternal death!) but if ever God should recover thee again, and revive his work, and enliven that almost dead carcass; then, at last, learn from thine own miserable experience, to take heed of taking cold again, as long as thou livest.

Thus much for the recovering the heart, which is presupposed to the keeping of the heart.

The heart thus recovered out of its lost state, must be kept and well looked to, that it fall not back again: and here,

II. *Now* I shall show you, what it is to keep the heart, or how it must be kept. And so, 1. It must be kept under government. 2. It must be kept under guard.

1. It must be kept under government. Here I shall show, (1.) The necessity of keeping the heart under government. (2.) How the heart must be governed.

(1.) The necessity of keeping the heart under government.—This will appear by considering what a heart it is; and because the heart is recovered in part, and there is much of its old and original depravity remaining in it, which will be apt to boil up, and break forth again, I shall a little open the wretched temper and disposition of it, which will evidence how great a necessity there is to keep it under government.

i. It is a wicked mischievous heart.—“*Desperately wicked;*” (Jer. xvii. 9;) “*Very wickedness;*” (Psalm

v. 9;) "*Enmity against God.*" (Rom. viii. 7.) It is the fountain, whence all the filthy streams that pollute and defile our lives, do flow and are cast forth. It is the furnace, whence all the noisome fume and smoke that annoy the world, are sent forth. It is the nest where cockatrice eggs are hatched. It is the sink that gathers in all manner of filth, and then sendeth it abroad to do mischief. "*His heart gathereth iniquity to itself,*" as the sinks gather in all the filth of the town; and "*when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.*" (Psalm xli. 6.) Only there is this difference between this and other sinks: other sinks gather in the filth, but it is in order to the conveying and carrying it away. Into this evil sink of the heart, all the filth is gathered; and there it stops, and stinks, and casts itself back in its annoying streams. "*Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,*" &c. (Matt. xv. 19.) All this filth and mud, all this wickedness and malignity, as it naturally dwells in every heart, so there is much of it remaining, even in renewed hearts, and, if there be not constant care to keep it down and to cast it out, will rise and swell and work up again in them. Christians, you may thank God, that there is salt cast into those filthy fountains, for the healing these muddy waters; that there is a spring of living waters broken in your hearts, to drain out your dirt; that there is grace begotten in you, to resist and repel the contagion of lust: but this little grace will be choked up again, if lust be not kept under.

And as it is a wicked, so it is a mischievous heart; it is set upon mischief: wickedness will be doing wickedly. As it is said of the workers of iniquity, so it is true of all, as far as they are unrenewed, "*Mischief is in their hearts.*" (Psalm xxviii. 3.) There is the same reason for keeping our hearts under restraint, as for keeping madmen in,—they will be doing mischief if they have liberty. Besides the mischief that our evil hearts will be doing to others, they will be injuring themselves: madmen will tear their own flesh, will cut and wound themselves, if they be let alone: and there is no such danger of evil hearts as in regard of that mischief they do themselves.

(i.) Our evil heart will hinder us from doing good to

ourselves, or of receiving or laying up good for ourselves:—“*The good that I would, I do not.*” (Rom. vii. 19.) Why, what hinders? See verse 21, “*I find a law,*” the law of sin in the heart, “*when I would do good, evil is present with me.*” “*The flesh lusteth against the Spirit—so that we cannot do the things that we would.*” (Gal. v. 17.) Sometimes good counsel is given us from the Lord, but we do not take it. How many good counsels have you heard from the ministry of the word, that are lost and forgotten, and come to nothing! Sometimes a good motion comes into the heart to repent and mend our ways; to pray or to meditate, or to search our hearts; to cease from this earth and flesh, from serving our sense, and minding only the present, and to lay up treasure in heaven, and provide for the time to come. Have you never such motions? Do you never hear such a voice within you,—Get you bags that wax not old, a treasure in heaven that faileth not? Choose the good part; lay hold on eternal life. Give yourself to praying; keep a good conscience: take heed and beware of covetousness; use more diligence, live with more heedfulness; have your conversation in heaven, and keep yourself unspotted from the world; keep yourself in the love of God; set the Lord always before your eyes, behold his face in righteousness; study to show thyself approved of God, and to walk so in all things, that thou mayest be accepted of God:—are there not such motions as these come into your hearts? You that are Christians, sure you have many such good motions: but how do they take? What do they bring forth? If you had obeyed all the good motions that you have sometimes felt within you, O, what manner of Christians would you have been! What mortified, what circumspect, what raised and heavenly-minded Christians had you been? But how do the good motions take? what success are they attended with? Do not you see, that they are often strangled in the birth, and die away, and come to just nothing? Or at least, do you not merely halt and trifle in the pursuance of them? If you pray, or hear, or set your hearts to humble yourselves before the Lord, how are you distracted, and diverted, and deadened, and

all your duties spoiled in the doing ; so that you can have little comfort or real advantage by what ye do ! Do you not often mourn over your prayers, and sermons, and Sabbaths, as merely lost to you ? When you would work upon your hearts heavenward, and fix them above ; when you would love and delight yourselves in the Lord, and solace yourselves in the contemplation of the divine love and goodness ; when you would fain set your hearts to live a godly, conscientious, circumspect, self-denying life ; and comfort yourselves with such thoughts,—I hope I shall never live such a careless, carnal, useless, unsavoury, earthly life again : (I hope you have many such thoughts, desires, hopes, and aims ; you are lamentable Christians if you have not :) but how do they succeed ? what do they bring forth ? Do they not often prove abortive, and bring forth nothing ? May it not be said of you, as of those, “ *They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, or a lie ?* ” (Job xv. 35.) May it not be said of you,—I have conceived truth, conceived good ; I have had many hopeful conceptions, and yet at last I bring forth a lie : I am utterly frustrated and disappointed of all my good hopes, desires, and aims ? But how comes this to pass, that you are thus disappointed, that your desires succeed not, that your labours prosper not, that you are brought to no better pass ? O, it is your evil hearts that hinder you : when you would do good, evil is present with you, so that you cannot do the good that you would : it is that evil law in your members, that evil heart, that does you all this mischief ; that spoils all your prayers, that distracts all your holy meditations, that breaks all your holy purposes, that defeats and frustrates all your good designs for a more holy and fruitful life : this heart is that which hinders you, that you cannot do as you would, you cannot pray as you would, nor hear as you would, nor live as you would ; and thus it will serve you as long as you live, if you do not get those evil hearts in tow, and keep them in better order.

(ii.) It tempts and turns us aside after that which is evil. —As our hearts hinder us in that which is good, so they betray us, and entice and tempt us to that which is nought. “ *Every man when he is tempted, is drawn aside by his own*

lust," his heart's lust, "*and enticed.*" (James. i. 14.) You that have given up your names to Christ, and count yourselves the people of God, sometimes turn aside after the lusts and ways of the world; and instead of having your conversation in heaven, live as men that are written in the earth, mind earthly things, follow a worldly, greedy life; and, like those who, "*after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, are again entangled therein, and overcome.*" (2 Peter ii. 20.) Are there none of you professors, with whom it is thus? Hath not the world returned upon you?—the love of the world, and the cares of the world, and the inordinate minding and following of the world? Are none of you again entangled by the world, encumbered by the world, and even overcome of those encumbrances? It would make a tender heart shake and bleed, to consider how sadly this worldly mind and life hath grown upon professors, and hath eaten out the very heart and life of their religion. O, how many like Demas are there among the followers of Christ, that have forsaken him, and embraced this present world! Christians, in the name of the Lord, I warn you: I charge you, before God and his holy angels, to consider if it be thus with any of you. Is it thus with thee? How comes this to pass? This is a mischief that thine own heart hath done thee. "*Their heart goeth after their covetousness.*" They hear the word, "*thou art unto them as a very lovely song, of one that hath a pleasant voice.*" (Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.) They will hear a good minister; they seem to love a good sermon; the doctrines of God and his Gospel, the doctrines of Christ and his redemption, and the most enlivening and affectionate discourses of the righteousness, holiness, kindness, compassion of God in Christ, and of the hopes and joys of his saints,—these have a pleasant sound to them, they are taken with and pleased at the hearing of them. But, for all this, they are gone,—they have embraced this present world; their hearts are gone after their covetousness. And, as some men's hearts carry them after their covetousness, so other's hearts carry them after their vain company, others after their slothfulness, others after their

carnal pleasures : their hearts have tempted them, and by their hearts' lusts they are thus drawn aside, and enticed. Consider these two sorts of mischief men's hearts do them,—their heart hinders them from what is good, and tempts and carries them away after that which is evil,—and then you will understand what a necessity there is, that such mischievous hearts should be carefully kept under government.

ii. It is an unruly heart.—It is said concerning the tongue, "*It is an unruly evil ;*" (James iii. 8 ;) but whence is the unruliness of the tongue, but from the unruliness of the heart? It is the heart that is the lord of misrule. "*He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city.*" (Prov. xvi. 32.) There is need of more wisdom, of more watchfulness, of more care and skill, to rule the heart, than to rule a whole city or country. Governors of kingdoms do not find it so hard to rule their numerous people, as to govern their own hearts. To show the unruliness of the heart, I shall instance,

(i.) The thoughts of the heart.—Who can rule his own thoughts? Who is there that hath such command of them, that can think of nothing but what he should think of? What roving, and stragglings, and wanderings are there of the thoughts! "*The eyes of a fool,*" or his thoughts, "*are in the ends of the earth ;*" (Prov. xvii. 24 ;) running about everywhere to sin, to vanity, to impertinencies. Consider yourselves, in your praying, or hearing, or in any of the most serious and important exercises of religion : your thoughts, then, most especially, should be composed and fixed ; should be fixed upon God, should be all giving their attendance upon the work of God. Those most weighty things, the eternal things that you are dealing about, should take up all your thoughts. But how do we find it at such times? What distraction, and wandering, and running of our thoughts, do we then find? We cannot hold ourselves in, to think what we pray for, to attend on what we hear. And this is the great reason of the deadness of heart in prayer ; of the inefficacy and unfruitfulness of our hearing. We that preach to you, should have more hope of success upon you, if we could but fix your hearts, and get you to think more intently on what

we speak ; but when the thoughts are gadding, we may to as good purpose speak to stones, as to souls.

How is it with you now ? And how does it use to be with you, when you come to the worship of God ? Where have your thoughts been, since you came here ? How many things have you been thinking of, that you should not ? It may be, thy thoughts have been at home all this while, or abroad in the fields, upon thy business, or upon thy pleasures, or thou knowest not where. Who are there of us that do use to gird up the loins of our minds, and to keep them close to the work we are upon ? And whither do your thoughts run at other times ? How little room is there left for the thoughts of God, or of our souls, or of the things eternal, amongst those crowds and swarms of worldly thoughts, of wicked and vile thoughts, of vain and impertinent thoughts, which are still thronging in upon us ! These evil thoughts are not only from the suggestion of the devil, or from that variety of objects that we have before us,—from what we see, or hear,—but are also the streamings up of a corrupt heart. As out of a boiling pot of filthy liquor, or out of a reeking dung-hill, there arise stinking and noisome steams and smells, so naturally doth a corrupt heart steam up into the head, and fill it with vile thoughts and imaginations ; and, therefore, the cure that is prescribed for these evil thoughts is, the cleansing of the heart from wickedness. “ *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness. How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee ?*” (Jer. iv. 14.) Get thine heart washed from its wickedness, and that is the best way to free thyself from ungodly thoughts. We have many complaints of vain thoughts, or disturbing and distracting imaginations ; and we hear people asking often, How shall I be rid of these evil thoughts ? Wo is me, what wandering, roving, distracted thoughts have I, so that I can never have comfort in anything I do ! But man, consider thou art under a worse disease,—the unmortified lusts of thine heart, from whence these thoughts arise.

Canst thou bear the lusts of thine heart ? The pride, and frowardness, and worldliness of thy heart ? Canst thou complain of thy thoughts, and not complain of thy lusts ?

One unmortified lust hath more mischief in it, than a hundred evil thoughts. Thy duty is to complain more of thy naughty heart, thy naughty disposition and inclination, and to get these changed, which is the best way to cure thee of evil thoughts. I say, it is the best cure: get you better hearts, wash your hearts from those evil lusts that dwell in them. If you would get rid of worldly thoughts, purge out worldly lusts; if you would be rid of proud thoughts, get the pride of your hearts slain; get you an humble heart, which is the best cure of proud imaginations: if you would be free from vain thoughts, light and impertinent and useless thoughts, get you cured of the vanity of your spirits; get to be serious; get a heart more intent upon serious things, and that will discharge you of such runagate and vagabond thoughts. It is seldom that people complain of distracting or vain thoughts; but there is a worse disease from whence they arise, that they take no notice of: thou hast a vain trifling heart; thou art not in good earnest in thy religion; thou art not sensible of the weight and importance of thine everlasting concerns; thou hast an unmortified heart, unmortified lusts in thine heart; thou lovest the world, and lovest thy pleasures, and lustest after thine ease and thy carnal delights; thine heart sits too loose from God and the things of God; thou art not powerfully and resolvedly bent for the blessedness to come; thine heart is not yet fixed upon Christ and Christianity: this is a worse disease than evil thoughts, though that be bad enough, and the very root from whence they arise. Do not, therefore, inquire barely, How shall I be freed from evil thoughts? but chiefly, How may I get my lusts subdued? How may I purge out those evil dispositions and desires? how may I get my heart more intently fixed on God, and things above? Get that done once, and thy evil thoughts will quickly fall.

(ii.) In the passions of your heart.—We have unruly thoughts and unruly passions; there is an unruliness in all our affections. Who can love, and fear, and desire, and grieve for nothing but what he should, what he should fear and desire? What we should not fear, we fear; and what we should fear, we cannot: what we should love, we

cannot; and what we should not love, we set our hearts upon. We cannot raise up good desires in our hearts, nor keep down evil. There is an unruliness in all our affections, but especially the passion of anger and wrath: when this breaks forth, what rude, and brutish, and wild creatures do men become! Like a roaring lion, or a raging bear; like a bear robbed of her whelps, such is a man in his rage, to those that stand in his way: the breaking forth of rage, is as the breaking forth of fire in a house. How much water must there be to quench it! This unruliness of spirit, the whole world abounds with proofs of: every country, every city, nay, but few families are there, whom experience does not teach what an unruly thing the rage of the heart of man is.

And is there not a necessity of keeping such a heart under government? Of governing the thoughts, and governing the passions and unruly affections? The necessity of government upon the account of the unruliness of our thoughts and passions, will appear, if we consider, that our eternal state is highly concerned in our thoughts and passions. For,

First, These are the instruments, by which men work out their own salvation or damnation. Second, These are evidences of what we are in respect of our eternal state.

First. These are instruments, by which men work out their own salvation or damnation.—Holy thoughts, holy affections, set us a working out our salvation: the exercising of our thoughts upon God, upon eternity, upon the blessedness to come, and upon the wrath to come; the exercising of our affections; the keeping ourselves in hope of the salvation of God; the keeping ourselves in fear of the reprobation of God; the maintaining desires after God and his salvation;—these all will be as so many cords to hold us in, as so many springs to put us on in the way of salvation. Thinking Christians, and hoping Christians, and fearing Christians, and desiring Christians, will be working Christians. “*I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.*” (Psalm cxix. 59.) “*Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*” (1 John iii. 3.) “*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*” (Phil. ii. 12.) Fear a miscarriage, fear

falling short, fear to be damned; and this will set you a working out your salvation. Men will not work because they do not desire, because they do not fear; men do not desire or fear, because they will not think: think more of God, think oftener what it is to be saved, what it is to be damned; think much thus, and this will stir up your desires and fears. Desire more the salvation of God, fear more his indignation and wrath; and this will set you to work out your salvation, and to secure yourselves from falling into condemnation.

As good thoughts and well-ordered affections, will set us working out our salvation, so by evil thoughts, and unruly affections, men work out their damnation. Unruly thoughts, disorderly affections in the soul, are as cross-winds, or as storms or tempests upon the sea. How can the mariner ever arrive at the haven, when the wind is contrary? And what kindness do tempests to him, but to dash him against the rocks, and drown him in the deep? Ungoverned thoughts and passions in the heart, are like mutineers in an army. What would an enemy desire more, than to have the army he was to fight against, in a state of mutiny amongst themselves? The devil will not doubt his conquest, whilst he can but keep all within you in disorder. Men's damnation frequently begins in thoughts: evil thoughts corrupt the affections; evil affections corrupt the manners and practice; and evil works have their end in destruction. Never again make a light thing of thoughts. How many men are there, who, by giving themselves leave to be thinking of their pleasures, and thinking of their gains, and thinking of their lascivious, lustful objects, think themselves into very beasts at first, and then into devils? "*I made a covenant with mine eyes: why then should I think upon a maid?*" (Job xxxi. 1.) The next to looking, is thinking,—the eyes let in fuel for the thoughts; the next to thinking, is lusting,—the thoughts provide fuel for lust; the next to lusting, is whoring; and the next to whoring, is death: and the like in other cases. For the world, the next to thinking is loving; the next to loving is lusting, and inordinate desiring; the next to lusting is seeking and proggg; the next to seeking, is getting and heaping up,

and loading ourselves with thick clay; and the next to this is, sinking and drowning ourselves in perdition and destruction.

Second. These are the evidences of what we are in respect to our eternal state. Men may judge themselves, and come to know themselves, by the thoughts and affections. "*To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. They that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.*" (Rom. viii. 5, 6.) Where art thou, friend? Art thou in the way of life, or in the way of death? Why, how may I tell that? Why, where are your minds? What are they running upon? Where are your thoughts, your most serious and delightful thoughts? Are they in heaven, or on earth; on things spiritual, or on things carnal? Where are your affections?—working upwards or downwards? Such as thy thoughts and affections are, such is the state of thy soul:—" *To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*" It is true, many serious Christians have too many carnal thoughts,—vain and wandering thoughts; but it is their affliction, and it is their care and endeavour to give check to such thoughts: but when the allowed stream runs towards earth and sin, it is a sign thou art an earthly, fleshly man, and in the state of the dead.

iii. There are idols set up in the heart, after which, if it be not well looked to, it is like to go a whoring.—It is true, more or less of all, what is said of the elders of Israel,—"*These men have set up their idols in their heart.*" (Ezek. xiv. 3.) Whatsoever the heart loves more than God, whatsoever the heart serves or seeks more than God; yea, whatsoever the heart loves, or serves, or seeks ultimately for itself, without respect to any higher end,—this is an idol set up in the heart. Those very men that abhor those idols that are set up in the house or the church, that detest saint-worship or image-worship, the worshipping of stocks or stones or pictures, the works of men's hands; yea, that call that an idol or idolatry, which God never called so; that cry out Idolatry, idolatry! against everything that is not according to their own minds; even these very men may have set up

their idols in their hearts. The heart hath multitudes of idols set up in it. There are in the heart, as the Apostle said there are in the world, "*gods many, and lords many.*" (1 Cor. viii. 5.) The world is an idol: some men make their lands and their money their gods. Though Job would not, (chap. xxxi. 24,) yet some men's hearts will say to their gold, Thou art my god. Others there are, who make their belly their god,—"*whose god is their belly.*" (Phil. iii. 19.) Others make their honours and their pleasures their god; and these may be said to be those who are "*lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.*" (2 Tim. iii. 4.) The heart hath many idols set up in it; but the great heart-idol, to which all the rest must stoop and serve, is self. The world is served, honours are sought, pleasures are loved,—but all for the sake of self. Whatever idol there be, the great idol is self, which is set up in the room of God.

Man's original apostasy was, his falling from God to self; and man's recovery to Christ is, his being brought back from self to God. Therefore he tells the world, that whoso will come along with him, and be his disciple, must deny himself. "*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*" (Matt. xvi. 24.) "*Christ suffered—that he might bring us to God.*" (1 Peter iii. 18.) That man cannot do, unless he come back from self: he departed from God when he declined to himself, and he must deny himself that will return to the Lord. God and self divide the whole world. The most are for self; and there is not a man of all these for God: some few are for God; and every one of these have denied and departed from self.

Men's recovery by Christ, is their returning from self unto God. But this recovery is but imperfect; this self—carnal self I mean—hath a seat, higher or lower, in the best hearts. There is a sinful selfishness, wherewith we still remain infected; and there is still a danger, even after our recovery, of apostasy to this self again. The great idol set up in the heart is self; and the great idolatry, or going a whoring after this idol,—the great heart-idolatry,—stands in these three things:—(i.) Self-conceit. (ii.) Self-will. (iii.) Self-love.

(i.) Self-conceit.—The magnifying our own opinions, the idolizing our own apprehensions, the growing wise in our own eyes, and the resigning up ourselves to the conduct and government of our own carnal reasons or understandings. This, Solomon intimates, is an encroaching upon God, yea, denying God: he sets these two as opposites, one to the other,—the acknowledging of God, and the leaning to our own understandings: “*Lean not to thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him.*” (Prov. iii. 5, 6.) Intimating, that whilst we lean to our own understanding, we deny and do not acknowledge God. It belongs to God as God, to be our supreme guide and dictator; but when men take upon them to be so wise, that their own opinions and conceits must be their guide, they therein deny the God that is above.

Take heed of being self-conceited. The worst of sinners, blind as they are, are wise in their own eyes: they think their way is good, and their state is good; they have a conceit that their own way is best; they have taken up conceits against the ways of God: this strictness of religion, this preciseness of holiness, they have a conceit it is but nicety and hypocrisy, and that they are the wisest men who meddle least with it;—at least, they have a strong conceit they shall go to heaven without so much troubling themselves about it. Let the Lord God speak never so clearly, and never so closely, of the danger of the way they are in, of the damnableness of their state, of the necessity of a change of their state and life, of their becoming new men, and giving themselves to a new life, yet their self-conceit carries it against all the convictions and demonstrations of the Lord: they will not be beaten out of their own conceits; they will believe their own blind and sottish mind, before they will believe God. Sinners, is not this true? How many times hath the Lord God preached to you of the necessity of regeneration, and your being born again; of the necessity of sanctification, your being made his holy ones, pure and undefiled ones? How much hath he spoken to convince you that you are the sons of death, and that your ways are the ways of death; that you can never see the kingdom of God,

but must undoubtedly perish, and be destroyed for ever, without such a great and effectual change as may bring you in amongst his holy ones? How often hath this been preached? how plainly hath this been proved? And yet after all, how is it with you? Why, behold, you have a conceit you shall do well enough, and get to heaven at last; and upon this conceit you will adventure your souls! What do you herein but idolize your own understanding, and deny the God that is above? "*Thus saith the Lord,*" is nothing with you, nor will persuade you to anything, if your own hearts do but tell you 'tis well enough already.

Sinners, if you will not be beaten out of this conceit, if we cannot break down your carnal confidence, if we cannot deliver your souls out of the hands of these lies and delusions; if you will not be brought to see, that these your self-conceits are your self-deceivings, ~~for~~ I have thought foolishly, I have thought falsely, in thinking well of my case; if we cannot save you from your vain conceit and confidence, we shall never set up the authority of God in you, nor ever bring you to God, or to heaven.

O, to hear such words as these from you,—I have been deceived, mine heart hath deceived me, the devil hath deceived me; I could never have had a good thought of my present state, I could never have good hope of my future state, if I had not been deceived into it; I have been merely gulled and cheated into this good opinion; I am lost, I perish, I die for ever, if I escape not suddenly out of this case; I can be confident no more, I can have a good conceit of myself no longer, I am an undone wretch; God tells me so, the word tells me so; and if ever mine heart tell me yet again, "'tis well enough," I will never believe it again:—might we see such a sense upon you, might we hear such words from you, then there were hope that you were coming back from self to God.

For you that are professors,—have not you also something of this self-conceitedness upon you? Some are conceited of their own opinions. Whatever opinion they take up in the matters of God, it must be right, because it is right in their own eyes; and many of their brethren that are contrary minded, they are in the wrong, and in

the dark, and so become the objects of their censure and reproach. Lean not to your own understanding; be so humble, and so modest, as to think that others may see more than you see; suspect yourselves, when you differ from other Christians, that you may be in a mistake. Others are conceited of their gifts and attainments, though they yet be but among the young ones, and the weak ones of the flock; yet through that pernicious pride of their heart, they are apt to be puffed up with high conceit of any little that they have. Christians must be lowly, like their Master,—“*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart;*” they must think soberly of themselves. Others are conceited of the condition and the state of their souls, who, though they have little acquaintance with their own hearts, little understanding and experience of religion, and have spent as little time in examining their state, yet are grown to a confidence that their hearts are right in the sight of God, when this confidence may be nothing else but conceit: they do but conceit themselves to be converts, conceit themselves to be believers; and this conceit must carry it against all convictions to the contrary. Examine the grounds upon which your good opinion of yourself is built; “*search the Scriptures,*” where are certain evidences of conversion; search your hearts, whether the marks of real believers be found in you; suspect yourselves, whether you be not in a mistake. A mistake here, —to have a strong conceit that you are believers, when you are but hypocrites; that you are come to Christ, when, it may be, not come half way;—such mistakes may be your damnation, your everlasting loss and undoing. Let the fear of self-deceiving, be the cure of self-conceitedness.

(ii.) Self-will.—That brand which is put upon false teachers and their followers, (2 Pet. ii. 10,) is upon the heart of every sinner,—they are self-willed; and this brand is more or less remaining upon the heart of every saint. There is too much of self-willedness in the best hearts. Here I shall show you, *i.* That the great controversy betwixt God and self is, whose will shall stand. *ii.* That in the conversion of a sinner, the power of self-will is broken. *iii.* But yet the will is not so broken, but self

hath still a root remaining, which will be putting forth again. *iv.* That therefore, there is a necessity of keeping the heart under constant government.

i. The great controversy betwixt God and self is, whose will shall stand.—God will have his will : “ *I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow.*” (Isa. xlv. 23.) In one way or other, first or last, I will make them all to stoop. God will have his will, but self also will have its will : what is said concerning the wisdom of the flesh, is true of the will of the flesh,—the wisdom of the flesh “ *is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*” (Rom. viii. 7.) The will of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed will be. What is the will of God ? “ *This is the will of God, even your sanctification.*” (1 Thess. iv. 3.) He hath said, “ *Be ye holy, for I am holy.*” (1 Pet. i. 16.) This is the will of God to sinners, their salvation. He “ *will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*” (1 Tim. ii. 4.) The reason why so many are damned, is not because God will have them damned, but because they will not be saved. Though they will the end,—their salvation, yet they will not the means,—their sanctification. This is the will of God, in order to the salvation of sinners,—their humiliation, their repentance, their obedience to the Gospel. But these self-willed sinners will not be humbled, will not repent : though their lives lie upon it, they will not ; though their salvation depends upon their humiliation and repentance, yet they will not be humbled, they will not repent ! The will of God is, that men “ *set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth.*” (Col. iii. 2.) The will of sinners is, to set their affections on the earth, and not on things above. The will of God to sinners is, their submission to his government, to his disposal ; but the will of the flesh is, to be their own lords, to be at their own disposal. Sinners are for living as they will, for having what they will ; they would be let alone to take their own course, to walk in the way of their own hearts, and the sight of their own eyes. Now this is the great controversy between God and

sinners,—whose will shall carry it. But you will say, How can man have a controversy with God? How can the will of man stand it out against the will of God? So the Apostle, "*Who hath resisted his will?*" (Rom. ix. 19.) Answer. There is the will of God concerning events or matters of fact, and there is the will of God concerning matters of duty. As to the will of God concerning events, what God hath decreed and determined to be done, shall be done: thus there is no resisting his will. But then, there is the will of God concerning matters of duty. God wills that it shall be every man's duty to repent and be sanctified, and be obedient to the Gospel; and accordingly commands them. And though there can be no such resistance here, but what God wills to be men's duty shall be their duty, yet such resistance there is, that what God wills to be men's duty to do, they will not do.

God governs the world, and orders everything to come to pass in the world, according to his will. But then there is his natural and physical government, which he carries on by his absolute power; and there is his moral government, by laws,—his governing men as rational creatures, by laws, and by rewards and punishments. This is the governing will of God that men make use of, the reason that they consider what it is that he requires, and what it is that he forbids: that to the drawing them to obedience, and the deterring them from disobedience, they consider and improve God's arguments,—the great and eternal rewards of obedience, and the dreadful and eternal penalties of disobedience; and so to order their course, that they may attain those blessed rewards, and escape those eternal punishments. And here he does not impose an invincible necessity upon men's wills, but leaves men to their choice. He commands them to obey: that is his governing will. But if they will disobey, let them at their own peril. And this commanding will of God, is that which self doth resist. God wills and requires men to repent; but they will not repent. God requires men to be holy; but they will not be holy. God requires men to seek, and to work out, their own salvation; but they will not, but set to, damning their own souls. God requires men to submit, not only

to his precepts, but to his disposal,—whether to be rich or poor, whether to be in honour or content, whether to be in health or in sickness; but they will do neither. They will be, as far as they are able, their own lords and their own carvers: they will obey themselves, and will shift for themselves: they will not be content it be with them as God will have it. God would have them in all estates to be content: this they will not be, but would have everything, and to their own minds, whatever the will of God be.

There is in this self-will,—Wickedness, or mischief; and stiffness.

(i.) Wickedness.—The things willed, and the willing of them, are either materially or circumstantially wicked; and eventually they are pernicious and mischievous. What is it, sinner, that thou wouldst have? Why, I would have mine ease, I would have my pleasure, I would have my liberty, I would have mine own way. Why, man, all this is nought for thee. Thy ease, and thy pleasure, and thy carnal liberty, they are all nought for thee. But who shall be judge whether they be nought or no? If self and sense may be judge, these will say, It is all very good that I would have. Is not ease good? Are not pleasure and liberty good? Are pain and bondage good? It is good that I have my liberty, and my way. But if God may be judge, if reason and conscience may be judge, those will tell thee,—thy ease, and thy carnal liberty, and carnal pleasures, are all nought for thee: they are like to be thy bane, and thy ruin, and everlasting undoing. But yet these are the things that their wills are for.

(ii.) Stiffness, or stubbornness.—He is counted a self-willed man that is stiff and stubborn, and will not be persuaded out of his own way: his heart is “*set in him to do evil.*” (Eccles. viii. 11.) His will is set upon evil, and he is set upon his own will. You say it is nought to live in ease and idleness; you say, this carnal liberty, these carnal pleasures, these sinful gains, are all nought for me. Well, however, saith the self-willed heart, Be it good or evil, be it right or wrong, it is that which I like, and is grateful to me; and therefore come what will, I must have it. I am for my pleasures, and carnal contentments, however; I am

for my liberty, however ; I am for growing rich in this world, for a thriving prosperous state, however. Be content to be poor and in disgrace, who will for me ; be content to come under the restraint and severe government of conscience, who will for me : I am for my freedom to do and live as I list.

This now is the great controversy betwixt God and self,—whose will shall stand. God will have his will, and self would have its will : and the heart is ever apt to side with self against God. Sinners, learn to understand yourselves, by what hath been spoken. Art not thou this self-willed creature ? What is it that carries the great stroke in thy life ? What is it that thou contendest for, but to have thine own will ? What is the law or the rule thou wouldest live by, but thine own unruly will ? This would please the sinful world, if every one might be left to live as he will,—to do what he will, and to have what he will. What is the rule that sinners do actually live by, but their own wills ? What is it that hath kept you from Christ, so many of you, all this while ? that hath kept you from repentance ? This is your own wilfulness. You have been persuaded to Christ, but you will not come ; you have been persuaded back from your sins, but ye will not come back ; you have been instructed in the way of life, but you will not learn ; you have been taught and called upon to become new men, to become serious Christians, but you will not hearken ; you have been pressed to give yourselves to prayer, to study the Scriptures, to examine your own hearts, to order your conversations according to the Gospel, but you will not yield unto it : you will walk after the flesh, you will be proud, you will be covetous, and carnal livers,—and thus you spend out your days.

Sinners, consider, who is it fit should have the government of you ? The will of God, or your own wills ? What would be best for you in the end,—to be subject to the law of God, or this law of sin ? What is it that God would have with you ? This is the will of God, your salvation. He would have you to heaven : he would that these poor souls of yours, whom the devil hath made drudges to your

flesh, and slaves to his lust, and sacrifices to his malice,—God would have to be vessels of honour, to bear his image, to shine forth in his glory, to live in his likeness, and to rejoice in his everlasting joy. Man, this is that which God would have,—that thou mayest live in everlasting blessedness. He would have thee to heaven; and he would have thee by a holy life, to be fitted for that blessed life, to be made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Therefore it is that he commands you to repent; therefore it is that he with so much importunity persuades you to Christ, that he might wash you with his blood and guide you by his word, and sanctify you by his Spirit, and “*present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.*” (Jude 24.) This is the will of God, that you should be thus governed, and thus ordered; that these earthen vessels—these dirty souls—might be made vessels of honour, and to his everlasting praise.

And what is it that your own wills are for, but to live so, that you may be fit for nothing, but to be vessels of contempt, to be fuel for the everlasting fire? The devil and your own hearts conspire so to sully and to blacken you with your ways, that you may be fit for no other place, but to live in the smoke and the fire of the everlasting furnace.

God’s will is to bring you to that inheritance which is reserved in heaven: he would have you to experience all the hell you shall have on this side the grave, and your heaven in that eternity which comes after; your sorrows all here, and your troubles here, and hereafter your rest from them all. But your will is, to have your heaven here, your good things here, your mirth and your pleasure here, and so leave nothing but your hell for hereafter.

Now which of these two wills—God’s will, or your own will—is the best for you to be governed by? If you say, God’s will is better for me to follow than mine own will, it will end best, whatever it seems to be at present: then one would think you should see so much reason against this self-willedness, against this wilfulness, and hardness, and obstinacy in your own ways, as to tremble to think of

being left any longer under the government of your own wills.

Sinners, let me do you a kindness this day. Let me break the yoke of bondage, the will of your flesh from off your necks, and unhorse your riders : the devil rides your will, and your will rides your souls. Come off from this drudgery ! Let me do the Lord this honour this day, to persuade you under the government of his will. What God would have me to do, that will I do : as God would have me to live, so will I live. Will you say the word once ? God would have me be a penitent ; and through his grace a penitent I will be. God would have me to be a Christian, a sincere Christian ; and through his help a Christian I will be. God would have me to walk humbly, to live honestly, to live a blameless conscientious heavenly life ; and O, this is the life that I will give myself to. What if you should say this word, and say it heartily ? What if this word should prevail to fetch you off from your wilfulness, and the hardness of your hearts ; and lay your souls at the feet, and under the government, of the Almighty ? What if such a change should now be wrought upon you, that your hearts should now be brought about from self-will, towards God ; from lust, to conscience ; from this thy carnal, and sensual, and vain life, to a spiritual and heavenly life ? Would you not bless God for such a change ? Would you not say, This is a happy day for me ; a blessed change the Lord hath wrought upon me ? Then hearken to the word you have heard, and say the word once,—I will be the Lord's ; and from henceforth he alone shall have the government of me. You that will not, but will be self-willed still, will be hardened in your way still, go home and chew upon this thought,—Whither will this wilful hardened heart lead me at last ?

ii. In the conversion of a sinner, the power of self-will is broken ; the controversy betwixt God and the sinner is determined.—The controversy is, whose will shall stand,—the will of God, or the will of the flesh ? In conversion, the sinner yields that God's will shall be thenceforth his law. It was foretold of Christ, (Genesis iii. 15,) that he should bruise the serpent's head : the serpent's head is his power

over man, and his head-quarters is the will of man. This is his strong-hold: and in the conversion of a sinner, the devil is beaten out of, and hath lost, his strong-hold: "*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds.*" (2 Cor. x. 4.) The will of man, which is the great fort or strong-hold, is so broken and pulled down, that,

(i.) He is heartily willing to resign up to God, to his will and government.—He that before said, Not God's will, but mine own; can now say, Not my will, but the will of the Lord be done. He that before said, I will not that this man, that Christ, should reign over me; now says, I will not that this flesh shall rule over me. "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.*" (Psalm cx. 3.) The day of conversion is the day of God's power, wherein the power of God's grace is revealed upon sinners' hearts: in the day of this power sinners shall be willing. When the power of grace hath conquered the power of nature, the sinner shall yield and resign up to God, and be heartily content to be thenceforth under his rule and government. This is the voice of converts, which was the voice of the church:—"Other lords beside thee have had dominion over us: but" now "*by thee only will we make mention of thy name. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise.*" (Isa. xxvi. 13, 14.) The old lord is dead; it is deceased, and shall never rise: sin shall no longer have dominion over us; the devil shall no longer; will shall no longer have the dominion over us: to thee, Lord, to thee only, do we resign up ourselves. I resign to the Lord; I subscribe to the Lord; I give the hand to the Almighty, and put my neck under his yoke for ever: his I am, and him alone will I serve. This is conversion,—this breaking off from under the dominion of your own wills, and resigning up to the will of the Lord.

(ii.) He doth actually submit to, and obey, the will of God.—A convert doth not only say, I will submit, I will obey; but he doth submit, he doth obey. The old will may be contending still for the government; but the heart now answers, as the men of Sodom to Lot,—"*Stand back, this one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge.*"

(Gen. xix. 9.) Stand back, O my carnal will; stand back, this stranger shall no longer be lord over me: I have resigned up myself to the Lord, and him will I obey. Yea, and his will it doth obey. This is the will of God, that he repent; and the convert doth repent: this is the will of God, that he be holy and harmless, that he walk in all the commands of God blameless; and this he sets his heart to do. "*They also do no iniquity, they walk in his ways.*" (Psalm cxix. 3.)

iii. Yet the will is not so broken, but that this self and flesh hath a root remaining in it.—And this root will be springing and growing up again, like that root of bitterness, mentioned by the Apostle. (Heb. xii. 15.) That root of malice, that root bearing gall and wormwood,—the apostle warns them to look to it, that it spring not up again to trouble and defile them. This root, that self hath even in the will of converts, how often doth it actually spring up, and trouble and defile them? There is scarcely any business but self will have a stroke in doing of it; there is scarcely any duty but self strikes in, and spoils it in the performance. O how much of this self-willedness is there to be found even amongst Christians! How often is it, that their wills are set upon vanity; and how strongly are they often set upon their own wills! How heady and wilful are they in their way! What stiffness, and tenaciousness is there of their own purposes! They will not be advised nor persuaded out of their course. Though as to the main, they have resigned themselves up to the will of God; yet in many particular cases, either upon the mistakes in their opinions, or being overpowered by corruption, they are headstrong in their way, and will not be turned back. When they come to themselves, it is their shame and affliction it should be so; yet too often so it is, that this self-willedness carries them on, even against counsel and conscience.

It is true, where this self-will does carry the main stroke in the life,—where the ordinary course and way of the life is governed by will,—there is no conversion: but there is no convert but more or less does groan under the usurpation and tyranny of this self and flesh. You that are

Christians would never have lived as sometimes you have done,—you would never have carried it as sometimes you have,—so much against judgment and counsel, and the most serious advice, if will had not had too much power over you. We should be, even all of us, more considerate and deliberate in our goings; we should be more easily intreated and persuaded back from running headlong on in some of those ways, which cost us sorrow afterwards, if this self-willedness had not prevailed in us.

iv. Therefore there is a necessity that the heart be kept under government.—The government of the heart, is to the same end, and of the same necessity, as the government of a kingdom. The government of a kingdom, is to be for the encouraging of the good, and for the terror and suppression of the evil. (Romans xiii. 3.) To the same end is the government of the heart:—to foster, and cherish, and maintain, and keep alive the good that is in it; and to crush, and keep under, the evil that exists. If self-will hath an evil root in the heart; if this evil root be apt to spring up, then is there necessity of governing the heart, to keep it under.

To the governing the heart is necessary a double instrument,—a spur and a curb: a spur, to the good that is in us,—to quicken grace, and keep it in action; a curb, to that which is evil in us,—to restrain and hold under corruption. These two instruments of government are, the reward and punishment: the blessed reward will be a spur to grace; the punishment to come will be a curb to lust and flesh. The eyeing these two great recompences of reward—glory and wrath, the holding the sense of that life and death upon the heart, is a great part of our exercising this government upon us. Thy self-will is such an obstinate enemy, as nothing but fire and sword—the fire of divine indignation, and the sword of divine vengeance—will conquer and subdue it. There must be government, and there must be severe penalties kept in sight, or there is no good to be done. Friends, if ever you would conquer this self-willedness, show it the fire, the rack, the gridiron, the gibbet, the everlasting prison, that it is rushing and hurrying you upon!

Self-willedness is not only a kicking against the pricks, but a running upon the pikes of divine vengeance. Thou art heady, and wilful in thy way; thou art set upon thine own will: whatever thou likest, and art pleased with, thou art so set upon, that there is no persuading thee back. But be advised, take heed: if thou wilt be wilful, at thy peril be it: look before thee, to the precipice, by which this self-willedness is tumbling thee headlong down into the everlasting pit. Whenever you feel will begin to rise, and work,—work against reason, work against conscience, work towards iniquity and vanity;—when you feel this self-will getting up, lay hold upon the bridle, put on the curb, give check to it with all your might, look towards the land of darkness, whither it is carrying thee? When the fit is up, the wilful fit, (for though there be an abiding habit of wilfulness in the heart, yet it comes forth but by fits,) when the wilful fit is up, think,—Lord, what now? Whither is this wilful will driving me? What will be its fruits and wages? What end am I like to come to, if this be my way? Stop, O my wretched heart, strike sail! O, my obstinate will, take counsel; be well advised, and run not thus headlong upon thine own ruin.

O hold up such government in your spirits, that your hearts may be tractable, flexible, and pliable hearts: let them be stiff, and fast to the concernments of God, but loose and easily withdrawn from the interest of self; stiff against sin, stiff against temptation, resolute for holiness. Is thy will brought about for God, for religion, for conscience? Stand to it to the death; never be persuaded out of your religion; never be persuaded out of your conscience, or conscientious walking: let your hearts be resolved for the greatest strictness of religion; and be strict and stiff in such holy resolutions. But never again be so set upon your own wills, your carnal wills. Here get a pliable heart, never to be persuaded off from God, easily to be persuaded back from self and flesh. It is prophesied, (Isa. xi. 6,) that there shall be such a change wrought upon the rough, and furious, and ravenous spirits of sinners, by the power of Christ, that the wolf, and the

leopard, and the lion shall be so tamed, “*that a child may lead them.*” They shall be so flexible and pliant, that they may be easily led; that the least intimation from God, or from conscience, may bring them to anything; that when lust puts hardest upon them for sin,—when self presses most impetuously upon them for minding or pursuing its interest or will,—a word from God, a suggestion from conscience, may bring them about after the Lord: that self may never be able to fortify them against conscience; but that conscience may with ease break the bands, and loose the cords of self, and command them after God. It was said of Cæsar’s soldiers, that where his interest was concerned, they were more than men; in their own concerns, they were less than women. Let the servants of Christ learn so much of the soldiers of Cæsar: let them be so true, so fast to the interest of Christ, and to the religion of holiness, that they may be above the spirit of a man; and so the spirit of a Christian is above the spirit of a man: but let them sit so loose from the interest or the commands of self, that a woman, or a little child, may bring them back from the pursuance of it; that such a word, from whatever mouth it comes,—What is this self, or this flesh, to thee, that thou so hearkenest to it, or insistest so upon it? Wilt thou obey thine adversary? Wilt thou cleave to thy mortal enemy? Self is no better; it is the worst enemy thou hast: and wilt thou feed thine enemy? strengthen thine enemy? fight for thy enemy?—that such a word may be enough to countermand the will of the flesh, and to bring the heart back from obeying its strongest motions and lusts. This will be the blessed fruit of a due heart-government,—the defeating and subduing of self-will, and the sweet and easy compliance of the heart with, and its complacency in, the will of God: it will be no hard thing for such a soul to say, Not my will, but the will of the Lord be done.

(iii.) Self-love.

i. There is a self-love which is our duty.—There is an innate principle of love, planted by God himself in the nature of man, in his state of innocency. God hath made all men living lovers of themselves, and he would have them

so. That word, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,*" evidenceth that, we must love ourselves. The fruits of this self-love are,—(i.) Self-preservation. (ii.) Self-blessing.

(i.) Self-preservation, — the securing ourselves from mischief, the saving ourselves from danger: "*Save yourselves from this generation.*" (Acts ii. 40.) He that said, "*Save yourselves from this untoward generation,*" hath therein said much more,—Save yourselves from condemnation. To save ourselves from sin, to save ourselves from wrath, to save our souls, is a great duty lying on every man in this world: and this self-saving or self-preservation, our self-love will prompt and press us to. He that loveth himself will save himself; he that duly loveth his soul, will do what he can to save his soul. That men destroy and damn themselves; that men neglect Christ the author of salvation; that men neglect religion and godliness, and the way of salvation; is for want of true love to themselves. Sinners! Christ is preached unto you, and tendered to you; and if you loved yourselves better, you would love Christ, and accept of him. You are exhorted to repentance, to godliness; and if you loved your own souls, you would repent and be holy. Thou art an hater of thyself, an enemy, a murderer of thine own soul, who art not a lover of Christ, and of religion, and of godliness. What a brute art thou, O sinner! yea, worse than a brute! Thou canst love thy friends; thou canst love thy wife, and thy child; thou canst love thy companions; yea, thou canst love thy sins, and thy lusts; but thou hast no love to thy soul. It is laid down as a mark of wicked persons, among many others, "*Without natural affection.*" (2 Tim. iii. 3.) For a child to be without natural affection to his parents; for parents to be without natural affection to their child, for men to be strangers to their own flesh, without natural affection to their friends or relations, is a mark of a wicked man. What is it then for men to be without natural affection to their own souls? Wilt thou say, thou lovest thy soul, when thou so sadly neglectest thy soul; when thou takest no care for thy soul; when for the love of thy lusts, and thy pleasures, and thy companions, thou wilt damn thy soul?

Self-love

Sinners! what have you done for your souls ever since you were born? You have done something for your flesh: you have fed it, and clothed it, and wrought hard for it, to secure a provision and maintenance for it: but what have you done for your souls? What pains did you ever take that it might be well with your souls? What knowledge have you obtained? What grace have you received? What peace for your souls? Have you gotten peace with God? Have you done anything toward reconciling your soul to God? You know how little you have done. You have laden sin upon your souls; you have put guilt upon your souls; you have left them like the soul of a Laodicean, "*poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked!*" (Rev. iii. 17.) That soul within you is a miserable soul, a guilty soul, a blind and hardened soul, a polluted, naked soul. It would make your hearts ache, if you considered it, in what a woeful, wretched case you have left your souls to this day. If you have so much sense in you, think of it, and lay it sadly to heart,—what a miserable case you have left your souls in! The reason of this is, because you are without love to your souls: hence is it that you have had so little care concerning your self-preservation.

(ii.) Self-blessing.—There is a self-blessing, that is our duty.—Let him that "*blesseth himself in the earth, bless himself in the God of truth.*" (Isa. lxxv. 16.) He that loveth himself will bless himself. There is a double self-blessing:

First. A seeking our own blessedness.—Self-love will prompt us to seek a happiness for ourselves; not only to save ourselves from misery, but to bring ourselves to blessedness. The blessedness which true self-love wisheth and seeketh for itself, is in God, in the God of truth. He that truly loves his own soul, can be content with nothing less than God, for the blessedness of it. No state, no inheritance, no treasure, can satisfy him below heaven, and everlasting glory. There is not a man of you that loves his soul, but is seeking glory, and honour, and immortality for it; he is taking care, and taking pains, to get a place in heaven for his soul; to lay up treasure in heaven for it. Dost thou love thyself, who dost not bless thyself, or seek a blessing in God for thyself? Dost thou bless thyself in

God, who slightest God, who carest not for God, and who refuseth the blessing of God,—and this for the sake of thy lusts and pleasures? Sinner, lovest thou thyself? lovest thou thine own soul? O seek a blessing for it, a blessing in God, a blessing in heaven for it.

Second. An enjoying and rejoicing in your own blessedness.—Loving ourselves aright, is part of the fruition and enjoying ourselves, as loving God is of the fruition of God. No man that loves himself, but would enjoy himself, and bless himself in the reflection on his own happiness. And this is the self-blessing mentioned, Let him “*bless himself in the God of truth* ;” that is, let him satisfy himself,—let him comfort himself,—let him enjoy and rejoice over himself upon this account, that the God of truth is his God, and his happiness. Let him not bless himself in the earth,—that riches are his, that pleasures and honours are his, that he hath the world at will,—but that the Lord God is his; let him not cheer himself with the rich man’s song,—“*Soul, take thine ease,*” thou mayest enjoy thyself, for “*thou hast much goods laid up for many years* ;” (Luke xii. 19;) but let him take up the Psalmist’s song,—“*Return unto thy rest, O my soul* :” (Psalm cxvi. 7:) herein thou mayest bless thyself, herein thou mayest comfort thyself,—“*the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*”

Friends, you whose God is the Lord, you are the men that may bless yourselves; you are the men that may enjoy yourselves: you may look into your hearts with comfort; you may look upon your state with joy: you may bless yourselves that God hath given you such a heart; you may bless yourselves that God hath given you such a portion. You that have an interest in God, and this manifested by the image of God upon your hearts, you may enjoy yourselves and take comfort, as often as you look inward, and see the marks and the prints of divine grace stamped upon you; your very love to yourselves will make you to rejoice over yourselves, as often as you view the blessed frame into which the goodness and grace of God have brought you. Well, this self-love, with its fruits,—self-preservation and self-blessing,—is our duty; and

the Lord hath placed it in our hearts, on purpose to bring us on upon all our other duties.

God makes great use of this innocent self-love, in his government of the world. God governs by laws, and laws govern by their rewards and punishments, and rewards and punishments have their efficacy, by virtue of this love of ourselves. What would laws signify, were there no rewards to the obedient, nor penalties to the disobedient? These are the sinews and strength of law. And what would rewards and penalties signify to us, were we not lovers of ourselves? Our self-love prompts us to seek our good, and to prevent our misery. As far as we love ourselves, we desire our own happiness. It was self-love, that made those to say, "*Who will show us any good?*" (Psalm iv. 6.) It was the Psalmist's love to the church, that made him say, "*I will seek thy good;*" (Psalm cxxii. 9;) and hence it was that we endeavour the prevention of our ruin. Self-preservation is the fruit of self-love. Self-love is the first spring and motive to religion. It is true, when we come to be religious indeed, there are higher motives;—the love of God, the love of Christ, is the great argument to carry us on in sound religion, when we come to be Christians. Then the main motive to Christianity is, that which Christ used to Peter, to faithfulness in his ministry, "*Lovest thou me? Feed my sheep. Lovest thou me? Feed my lambs.*" (John xxi. 15.) "*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*" (John xiv. 15.) But the first motive to induce us to be Christians, is this self-love. Lovest thou thyself? Then give thyself to Christ. Lovest thou thy soul? Then be a Christian. Christ is the only way to blessedness. "*He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life.*" (1 John v. 1, 2.) Christ is the only way to blessedness, and the only security against misery, against everlasting misery. "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ.*" (Rom. viii. 1.) "*There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,*"—saved from death, from eternal death,—but the name of Jesus. (Acts iv. 12.) Now, when Christ says, "*Come unto me, and I will give you rest;*" (Matt. ii. 28;) "*Follow me, and ye shall have treasure in heaven;*" (Mark x. 21;) "*He*

that is ashamed of me, of him will I be ashamed before my Father who is in heaven ;" the intent and meaning of all this is,—if you love yourselves, come to me ; if you love your souls, keep my commandments ; if ever you would, that those souls of yours should be happy souls,—if you would not that they should be lost, and burned, and drowned in everlasting destruction,—if you love your souls, and wish their good and happiness,—if you would not be your destroyers and murderers,—if you have so much love to your souls, that you would they should be saved, and would not that they be damned,—then come unto Christ, be followers of Christ: believe, repent, and obey the Gospel. If you love yourselves, be holy ; if you love yourselves, be heavenly-minded ; if you love yourselves, be humble, be laborious, be circumspect, and walk in all things as becometh the Gospel. By the way, I exhort you to improve and maintain your true self-love. I say not to you merely, Husbands, love your wives ; parents, love your children ; Christians, love one another ; but every one of you,—love yourselves. If you love yourselves, you will love God ; if you love yourselves, you will love Christ ; if you love yourselves, you will love godliness ; if you love yourselves, you will be the followers of God, the disciples of Christ, and will give yourselves to live godly in Christ Jesus. See, therefore, that you love yourselves, that your poor souls may grow more dear to you. Be more zealous for the salvation of your own souls, be more fearful of their damnation, be more tender of wounding and wronging your souls. Take heed of sin : "*He that sinneth, wrongeth his own soul ; all they that hate me, love death.*" (Prov. viii. 36.) You that sin against God, ye wrong your own souls. Love your souls better, and you will never be such proud livers, or such worldlings, or such drunkards, or rioters ; you would be sober, and serious, and circumspect : if you loved yourselves better, you would take heed of this lying, and these oaths, and this unrighteous dealing, of this hardness of heart in your sins. You would fall upon your knees, you would fall upon your faces, and be ashamed, and bewail, and repent of your sins, and return to the Lord from them all, had you more of this true self-love within you.

Sinners, why come you not to Christ? Why will you not yet be persuaded to repent? Why, man, hast thou no love to thyself? The Apostle tells us, "*No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.*" (Eph. v. 29.) He useth that word, to press husbands to love their wives, who, says he, are their own flesh. Dost thou not love thyself? What wouldest thou say of a man, that doth not love his wife, but would play the tyrant and tiger, brawling and snarling, yea, fighting and beating her? You would say, This was a monster among men, rather than a Christian; worse than the very brutes, amongst whom such conduct is seldom seen, that the male snarleth, or biteth, or pusheth at the female. What then is he that loveth not his own soul? Lovest thou thyself? Lovest thou thine own soul? Then take heed of going on in thy sins; then take heed of standing it out against Christ. You hear what a reward there is for the righteous; you hear what an inheritance Christ hath laid up for his saints, an inheritance in light, life, love, joy, everlasting pleasure, and everlasting glory: Christ would make those poor souls blessed souls, joyful souls, glorious souls, partakers of the everlasting riches of his glory and joy. But what, wilt thou say, My soul shall have no part in it? My soul shall never come there; my lot shall never be with the saints, but shall be without,—amongst unbelievers, impenitents, amongst dogs, and sorcerers, and idolaters? In refusing to come to Christ, to repent, and be made holy, thou sayest in effect, My soul shall never come to heaven! Let it to hell, amongst dogs, and devils, and that vile and wicked generation of the damned. But, sinner, hast thou forgot that thou art a man? Art thou a monster of men? Hast thou lost all love to thyself, to thine own soul? Dost thou neither love nor pity thine own soul? Wouldest thou that Christ should ever love thee, when thou wilt not love thyself? Wouldest thou that Christ should ever pity thee, when thou wilt not pity thyself?

O sinners, love your own souls, pity your own souls, be not so cruel and hard-hearted to yourselves. Will you, for the love of your lusts, for the love of the world, sell your souls to the devil, sell them to hell, to make faggots

for the everlasting burnings? Where are your bowels? O pity, pity that poor blind and miserable soul of thine, and bring it to Christ for pity's sake: go on in thy evil ways no longer, be a drunkard no longer, a worldling no longer, a liar, a scoffer no longer; be no longer hardened in your sins, but come away to Christ, and escape for your lives. If you love yourselves, come; if you have any pity for yourselves come; let the dread of the cruelties of the devil, bring you back from following him; and come you in, and cast yourselves upon the blood, upon the bowels, and compassion of Christ, who is such an High Priest, as can have compassion upon the ignorant, and those that are out of the way, and even on the worst of sinners, that will return to him. What shall I say more to you? I will speak but the same words: Let every one of you see, that he so love himself, as Christ loved the Church, washing it, and saving it by his blood. Love yourselves, and save yourselves: love yourselves, and bless yourselves in the God of truth. Do not bless yourselves in the earth,—in your money, in your lands, in your carnal pleasures, in your carnal friends: these things are not, nor ever think they will be, your blessedness. But bless yourselves in the God of truth: bless yourselves in Jesus, whom God hath sent to bless you, "*in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*" (Acts iii. 26.) Turn to Christ, and you shall be blessed: be believers, and you shall be blessed: come in this day, and let your names be written among the blessed of the Lord: come every one of you, and put in your names among the disciples of Christ. Let me be one, Lord! let me be another! Write down my name for one among thy disciples! I am willing to be thine, and do solemnly covenant, and this very day give myself to thee! Who of you are there that will thus come in? Will you be persuaded to it, or must I lose my labour? Are there any of you? Is there any one of all the sinners in this company, that will thus come in? Come then in the name of the Lord; come, get your names thus written in the Lamb's book, and he will write it in heaven; there it will be found in the last day, written in the book of life. This do, and then you that have been hitherto the haters, and wrongers, and cruel,

will henceforth appear to be the lovers of your own souls.

ii. There is a sinful self-love.—This is the great heart-idolatry, and the root of all rebellion and disobedience to God. Here I shall show you,

(i.) What this sinful self-love is.

First. It is a love of mistaken self,—of carnal-self; a love of the flesh, and its affections and lusts; a love of that flesh which Christ would have us hate and deny. (Matt. xvi. 24.) “*Himself*,” that is, his flesh, or carnal self. Men are mistaken in themselves, and count that to be their self which is not their self. As Christ said to the woman of Samaria, concerning her husband, “*He whom thou now hast, is not thine husband* ;” (John iv. 18 ;) so may it be said, to sinners, That which thou takest for thyself, is not thyself; this flesh which thou takest for thyself, and lovest as thyself, is not thyself. You that love your flesh, you love your enemy; you that please your flesh, you are pleasing your enemy; you that are working for your flesh, providing for your flesh, and pampering your flesh, you are working for and feeding your enemy; you count you are seeking and working for yourself: no, it is for your enemy! This flesh is your mortal enemy. Now this is one sort of sinful self-love, when we love our flesh, or our corruptions; when we love ourselves, as fleshly-minded men; when we love to please, and provide for, and satisfy our fleshly minds; when we foster and cherish this flesh.

Second. An inordinate love of ourselves natural;—when we love that which is ourselves, more or otherwise than we ought to love it. Our natural selves, our bodies and our souls, are to be loved, *ut supra*. We ought to love ourselves; not our souls only, but our bodies also: and so to love them as to seek the good and well-being of ourselves; not only our eternal but our temporal well-being. We may love our ease, and our freedom from pain; we may love our credit, and our freedom from reproach and disgrace; we may love our maintenance and freedom from want; yea, we may love our beauty and comeliness, and freedom from deformity; and we may so love as to maintain and provide for ourselves in all these respects,—to maintain ourselves in

health, to preserve ourselves from temporal misery, to provide for our temporal necessities; but now our sinful self-love is, when we love ourselves more or otherwise than we should.

(First.) When we love ourselves more than God.—When we love ourselves to the neglect of God: as Christ said, "*He that loveth father or mother more than me; he that loveth son or daughter more than me;*" (Matt. x. 37;) so may it be said, He that loveth himself, his own flesh, his own life, more than me, "*is not worthy of me.*" Much more, when our self-love makes an abatement of our love to God; when self is loved so much, that God is loved the less; when the more self is minded or cared for, by so much the less God is regarded.—(Second.) When we love self, as separated from God, or otherwise than in subordination to God;—when our love determines in self, and rises no higher. Every man should love himself; but it must be for the sake of God, whose servant he is, and whose image he bears.—(Third.) When we love ourselves to the prejudice of the love of our neighbour.—The word is, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;*" thou shalt love thyself, but so as it may not hinder thee from loving thy neighbour. When self monopolizes our love; when our love, which should be a common, is an enclosure, and is impropriated and confined to ourselves; when we so intensely love ourselves, that we love nobody else, or care for nobody else, or at least love not others so much as we should; when we care not whom we displease, so we may but please ourselves; when we care not whom we neglect, so we may provide for ourselves; when we care not how it be with others, let them be in sickness, let them be in want, let them starve, let them die,—we care not how it be with them, so it be but well with ourselves; when our self-love is only for the advancing of self-interest, and will invade and encroach upon, and wrong the interest of others, when we can thereby advance our own. Lay these things together, and therein you may see what sinful self-love is,—a love of mistaken self, or an inordinate love of our natural self.

(ii.) That sinful self-love is the great heart-idolatry, and the root of all rebellion and disobedience to God.

First. It is the great heart-idolatry.—Whatever we love

more than God, we make it a God; yea, when we love any thing equal with God, or in separation from God, and not in subordination to God. If we love ourselves only for ourselves, we therein deny the God which is above: as he that loves riches only for riches' sake, as he that loves his meat and drink only for the pleasure he hath in eating and drinking; so he that loves himself, only for the sake of self, is an idolater. Whatever we make our main object, we make our God: therefore, as the Apostle, "*Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do,*" so whatever ye love or regard, or desire, let it be all, let it be only, for "*the glory of God.*" (1 Cor. x. 31.) "*To him are all things;*" (Rom. xi. 36;) by him they were made, and to him they must be directed. O beloved, what an idolatrous piece is the heart of man become! O what an idolatrous heart is there then in every one of us! Is self-love idolatry? Then who of us can be free from this charge of idolatry? We have every one of us more or less set up this idol, self, in our hearts. Do we not love mistaken self, our sinful flesh? Do not our hearts go out after our covetousness, our carnal ease, our carnal pleasures? Do we not love that carnal self, which should be denied, which should be mortified and crucified? Do none of us so love, as to cherish our flesh, and make provision for the flesh? Thou hast a proud heart, and dost thou not maintain and keep up that self-esteem? Thou hast a covetous heart, and dost not thou nourish and feed thy covetousness? Thou hast a lust after thy carnal pleasure and liberty, and thou indulgest it all thou canst: thou lovest to be high, thou lovest to be rich, thou lovest thy pleasure and thy liberty; these things thou lovest, and dost thou not love them more than God? The more thou lustest after these things, and the more thou hast of them, is not God so much less loved and regarded? Dost thou not know, that if thou hadst checked and crossed that proud mind, if thou hadst denied that covetous heart, the Lord God should have had more of thy regard, more of thy love, than now he hath? Do you not think you should have loved God better, if you had loved the world less, or your ease or your appetite less? Behold, these things have broken in and encroached

self-love idolatry
 covetousness
 pride
 lust
 indulgence

upon God's right, have carried away God's due; this self, for whose sake all these are loved, this self hath stolen into the heart, and carried it away after it.

O what a woeful thing is it, that it should be said of any professor of religion,—that this should be said of them, It were well for these men, or at least better than it is with them, if they loved God but as well as they love their flesh; if they served God as heartily as they serve their covetousness; if they were set upon the pleasing of God as much as they are set upon pleasing their appetites; if they were delighted in God as much as they are delighted in the world: if they could find as much pleasure in the meditation of God, and exercises of religion, as in the business of this life! Thou knowest it is not thus with thee: thou dost not love and delight thyself in God, as thou lovest and delightest thyself in this earth and flesh. Is communion with God,—is communing with thy own heart about the things of God; is conversing with God in prayer, in holy contemplation and meditation; is the exercising thy faith in God, thy hope on God; and thy looking into the Gospel of God, and searching out and feeding upon the blood and bowels, and unsearchable treasures laid up in Christ; is the exercising thyself in these things, as great a pleasure to thee, and dost thou find as great a delight in them, as thou findest in eating and drinking, in buying and selling, and getting gain? Dost thou love to be praying or to be praising the Lord, as thou lovest to be gaining money? Dost thou love to be sending thine heart to heaven, and there to solace it in the thoughts and joys of the Lord, as thou lovest to be thinking of thy corn, or thy cattle, or thy income by thy trade? Thou knowest thou dost not. Canst thou say, with the Psalmist, "*How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. A day in thy courts is better than a thousand;*" (Psalm lxxxiv. 1, 2, 10;) a door in thine house, is better than all the dwellings of the world: Lord, lift up thy countenance upon me, and that shall put more gladness into mine heart, than when their corn and wine increased. Let the corn and the wine be

whose it will, so that the Lord God will be mine; let this world go cross, and frown upon me as it will, so that the face and countenance of God do but shine upon me; let me be poor, rather than a stranger from God; let me want a house, or want money, or want bread, rather than want the presence of God! Canst thou say so, heartily say so? Thou knowest that thou canst not: the good things of the earth, the riches and the pleasures of the earth, are the riches thou lovest, and the pleasures thou lovest; and thou couldest be content to be straitened in the Lord, so that thou mightest abound in these carnal things. Is it so with thee? O what a heart hast thou? What dost thou think of thyself? Art not thou an idolater? a lover of money, more than a lover of God; a lover of pleasures, more than a lover of God; a lover of thyself, and flesh, more than a lover of God? And yet, art thou not an idolater? Doth thine heart go whoring after thine idols; run away from God after thy money; run away from God after thy pleasures; run away from God after thyself and flesh,—and yet not an idolater? Art thou an idolater then, an idolatrous Christian, an idolatrous professor? O, how is it that such a thought does not fill thy face with shame, and set thy soul weeping, and cause trembling and astonishment to take hold upon thee! What, friends, is it nothing with you to be idolaters! to have idolatrous hearts, whoring hearts, whoring from God, and whoring after your flesh and the lusts thereof? Sure, friends, it would make the best of our hearts to ache, if we were sensible how much of this idolatry were to be found in every one of us: and many of us, I fear, it would convince that they are idolaters to so high a degree that there is nothing of true and real love to God in them.

Second. It is the root of all rebellion and disobedience.—Self-love (2 Tim. iii. 2) is put in the head of a black troop of lusts and wickednesses. Men shall be lovers of themselves:—there is the ring-leader: and what follows? Behold, a troop cometh:—covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-

minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. What a regiment of sins is here, led on by self-love! Observe it,—lovers of themselves lead the van, and lovers of pleasures bring up the rear.

Heart-sins are root-sins, and self-love is the root of these roots. Pride is the root of contention; malice is the root of revenge; covetousness is the root of oppression; and self-love is the root of them all. The Apostle says, "*The love of money is the root of all evil;*" (1 Tim. vi. 10;) and self-love is the root of the love of money. That you may know what a mischievous evil this heart-sin of self-love is, and how pregnant of all other wickedness, consider that it is, (First,) The rot of all religion. (Second.) The root of all unrighteousness and unmercifulness. (Third.) The root of all sinful brawls and quarrels. (Fourth.) The root of sinful self-seeking.

(First.) It is the rot of all religion;—that is, where it is predominant, and carries the main stroke in our religion. It is the rottenness of the heart, under all its most specious religious pretences or performances. All sincere religion is animated by the love of God: the love of God is the soul of religion. If there be no love to God in our profession of religion, if no love to God in our practices of piety, if no love to God in our prayers, no love to God in our fastings and alms,—all our religion is rotten at heart: self-love, which is its only root, is its rottenness. Self-love will,

First. Limit our religion.—It will limit it by self-interest. No more, and no other religion will it allow, than will serve our carnal turns; no farther may we go in it, than will consist with this love of ourselves. Whatever part or exercise of religion will pinch upon the flesh,—the self-denying part, the self-abating part, the flesh-mortifying part of religion,—unless it be to some further ends, self-love will never bear it. So much professing, so much praying and hearing, as will consist with our ease and our safety, as will not put us to too much pains, or expose us to too much danger and reproach; so much religion, as will not hold us in too strictly, and severely, and closely; self-love will bear it: but where the yoke of Christ wrings and galls, there it must be thrown off.

Second. It will corrupt our religion, and turn it into hypocrisy.—Selfish professors are hypocrites, and all their religion is hypocrisy, and hypocrisy is the rottenness of the heart. You that are professors, see to it that ye be not self-loving professors : if ye be, whatever there be in your tongues, or your looks, or your religious performances, you are rotten at the core, rotten in your hearts. It is love to God, wherein our sincerity lies : self-love is our hypocrisy, and where this rotten self-love hath tainted your hearts, your hearts will taint and corrupt all your duties, it will pervert and corrupt all that ever you do, and turn it into quite another thing. Your religion is no religion ; your Christianity is no Christianity ; your praying is no praying ; your spirituality is but fleshliness ; your heavenly-mindedness is but earthiness ; your seeming fruitfulness is but emptiness and barrenness : “ *Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself.*” (Hos. x. 1.) Israel seemed to be a fruitful vine, that had her clusters upon it. There were clusters of prayers, and clusters of sacrifices, and clusters of alms. Israel had their fruits, and yet they were but a barren and empty vine. How so ? Why, whatever fruits they had, they were all brought forth to self : self brought them forth, and self eat them up : there was nothing for God : Israel was an empty vine to him, her fruits were to themselves. Friends, would you not be rejected for barren empty vines, for false-hearted and rotten professors ? Would you not be found rotten at the core ? See that it be the love of God, and not this self-love, lying at the bottom, at the root of your religion. } 6

(*Second.*) It is the root of all unrighteousness and unmercifulness to men.—Self-love will never learn that lesson, to do to others as it would be done by : it will catch all it can, and keep all it has : self must be advanced, self must be enriched, whoever be ruined by it : all manner of frauds and deceits ; all manner of oppressions and wrongs ; all men’s underminings, all men’s over-reachings of their neighbours, all men’s falsehoods in their words ; their promise-breaking, their lyings ; all their falsehood in their dealings, in their tradings, in their deceitful words, in their deceitful weights and measures ;—all this unrighteousness, it is

their self-love that puts them upon it. So they may get for themselves, and enrich themselves, how wicked soever the means or ways be to it, they care not who be impoverished or ruined. And where self will not suffer men to be righteous, it will less suffer them to be merciful: what they are so much for getting, they will be but little for giving: the hunger and nakedness, the pinching and pining, and even starving, of so many poor amongst us; the short alms they can get; and that little, that it is so hardly come by; the failing of compassions, the shutting up of bowels against those that are in need,—this is all from self-love. I shall need it for myself, I need it for mine own, I cannot spare it: that is often the word, that must go instead of an alms.

(Third.) It is the root of all brawls, and quarrels, and contentions in the world.—Whence are there such multitudes of troublesome lawsuits? What are they, but the contendings of self with self? One says, It is mine own, and I will have it, whatever it cost me: another says, It is not thine, but mine, and I will have it. This *meum* and *tuum*, how hath it set the world together by the ears! Not that there is unrighteousness in all suits at law;—the love of God may sometimes put men to make use of the law of man:—but those unjust or unreasonable contendings about trifles, or for that which is none of their own, in hope by their might or their money to rob the poor of their right,—these are pernicious quarrels, and it is self that sets them on.

(Fourth.) It is the root of self-seeking.—Holy self-love is the root of holy self-seeking. As the love of God is the root of seeking God, so sinful self-love is the root of all sinful self-seeking; and sinful self-seeking, is contrary to the seeking of God. The love of God is the root of our seeking God. These two—love of God, and seeking God—are put both together in one promise: “*I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.*” (Prov. viii. 17.) “*With my soul have I desired thee.*”—There is the love; and what follows? “*With my spirit within me will I seek thee early.*” (Isa. xxvi. 9.) The love of God will set us a seeking God. It is in vain that thou sayest, I love God, if thou canst not say also, I seek God; and the love

of self will put us on self-seeking: and this sinful self-seeking is ever contrary to the seeking of God,—“*All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's.*” (Phil. ii. 21.) All seek their own things,—that is, their own carnal things; and those that thus seek their own, seek not the things of Christ. There is this difference betwixt self-love and the love of God,—self-love divides interests: self stands single, and hath a separate and divided interest: that is the interest of self, which is the interest of none else; and self-love in seeking its own interest, seeks the interest of none else, neither of Christ nor of men. The love of God unites interests: he that loves God, the things of God and his own things, are the same: he counts nothing his own, but those that are also the things of God; and when he is seeking God, he is then most seeking his own. God is his own, and he counts nothing his own, but what is also the Lord's. When he seeks God, he therein seeks his own; and where he seeks his own, he therein seeks God. His soul is his own, and the interest and prosperity of the soul,—these are the things of God. It is the love of the brethren unites our interest with the interest of the saints; it is the interest of the whole body, that is the interest of every member; all the saints have the same common interest: so the love of Christ unites the interest of every member with the interest of the head; the love of God makes the things of God our own; and the love of the saints makes the things of the church to be also our own. It is betwixt Christ and Christians, and betwixt Christians one toward another, as it was betwixt the primitive Christians,—they have all things common: “*None said of aught that he possessed, that it was his own, but they had all things common.*” (Acts iv. 32.) Not but that Christians have a real property in their own estates, by virtue of which civil right their estates are so their own as that they are not another's; but yet, by virtue of the community of interests, what one man hath, should be, as there is occasion, to the benefit of the community. And whence was this? The love of God had united their interests; and the multitude of them that believed, were knit together by that love as one man: they were of “*one*”

We see here, if we have our selves at our own will, we should have

heart and of one soul." There is no *meum* and *tuum*, thine and mine, betwixt Christ and his saints; but all is mine: "*I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.*" (Cant. ii. 17.) We are not our own, say believers, we are thine: and I am not mine own, says Christ, I am yours, and that I have is yours. "*Tell my brethren, I go to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God.*" (John xx. 17.) My Father is yours, my God is your God,—all I have is yours. I am yours; my blood and my bowels are yours; my stripes, my wounds, and my righteousness, and my inheritance are yours. "*Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.*" (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.) My ministers are yours; mine ordinances are yours; my possessions are yours; things present, and things to come. If I have any right in this world, "*the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof;*" if I have anything in the world to come, the everlasting crown, the everlasting mansions,—all are yours, and ye are mine, and I am God's. Thus Christ's love to Christians causeth him to say to them,—I am yours, and all that I have. So the love of Christians to Christ helps them to say,—Lord, we are thine; and all we have are thine: not only our sins are thine, our infirmities are thine; but our parts and our possessions, our graces and our duties; yea, our houses and our lands, and our possessions,—all are thine.

Christians, we have been called together this day to a communion of love, and thereby to an espousal of interests betwixt Christ and us: we have received the pledges of his love,—his bread and his wine; he hath given us to eat and to drink, as the tokens he hath sent us down from heaven of his love. I have brought tokens to every one of you, from the Lord this day,—tokens of his love. We have received the pledges of his love, and we have returned the pledges of our love to him: our very accepting of Christ's token, hath been our returning of our tokens. Your communion together to eat of Christ's bread, and to drink of his cup, (provided it hath been in sincerity a spiritual eating, and a spiritual drinking,) your eating and

drinking his body and blood, Christ hath accepted, as a token of your love; and this communion of love hath been an espousal of interests. Christ hath hereby told you, "*Because I love you, I will be yours;*" and all that I have in heaven and in earth, you may henceforth call your own. I am your own Jesus: my Father is your own Father, and my God is your own God; and mine inheritance is your own inheritance. And you have said,—if you have sincerely accepted of Christ,—We are thine own, thine own flock; thine own inheritance; thy ransomed ones; thy redeemed ones, and thy peculiar people. This hath been the upshot of the transaction betwixt Christ and you this day,—the sealing to this word, "*I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.*"

And as there hath been an interchangeable communion of love, and espousal of interest, betwixt Christ and Christians, so also betwixt Christians and Christians. As we have said to our Lord, I am thine; so we have therein said one to another, I am yours: and must therefore walk in that tenderness of love; in that dearness of affection one to another; in that mutual care of each other's good; in that mutual sense of each other's afflictions; in that mutual delight in each other's societies; in that mutual helping, and counselling, and comforting one another, and hearty seeking and rejoicing in each other's good; studying to please each other for his good to edification; fearing to grieve, or offend, or wrong, or fall out with, or quarrel one with another; counting the interest of every Christian to be the common interest of the whole body; that we hereby may prove, that we love one another, "*not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*"

This now is the nature, and these are the fruits, of divine love,—it will unite hearts, and unite interests. This will be the interest of Christians, which will flow from the love of Christ, that Christ's interests prosper in the world; that the name of Christ be exalted, and be honourable, both in themselves and in the world; that Christ be loved, that Christ be praised; that the word of Christ, the worship of Christ, his Sabbaths, his ordinances, be exalted in the world; that the glory and holy image of Christ,—his

humility, meekness, lowliness, heavenliness, righteousness, mercy, may shine forth in our faces, and in the faces and ways of all his saints ; that we may in our particulars, and jointly, show forth the spirit and life of serious and powerful religion and godliness, in all manner of holy conversation. This we should account our interest with respect to Christ,—that he may be thus honoured and obeyed : and this will be the interest of Christians with respect to Christians,—that we may see one another, the whole vineyard, flourishing in the power of holiness, as living and lively instances of the grace of God ; and, as far as the Lord see it good, may see one another prospering in this world, even as our souls do prosper.

O Christians, espouse this common interest, and do what you can to promote it in the world ! Love Christ, and lift up the name of Christ ; love Christ, and show forth the image of Christ ; love Christ, and consecrate your life to Christ. Determine to know nothing, to value nothing, to rejoice in nothing, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And then, love one another, and study to please one another ; to profit one another, for their good to edification ; to cast in your lot together ; to rejoice together with them that rejoice, to grieve with them that suffer ; to live together in love, forbearing one another, forgiving one another, comforting one another, even as you yourselves would be loved, forgiven, and comforted of God.—This is the nature and the fruit of divine love,—it unites interests. But self-love, sinful self-love, divides interests : and so those that seek the things of self, their carnal things, seek not the things of Christ.

iii. Sinful self-love hath a root remaining in the best hearts, even of the regenerate.—Though, in conversion, self hath lost the dominion, and be cast down from the throne, yet is there a secret tabernacle, a corner in the heart, where it fortifies itself, and is still aspiring to recover the throne it hath lost. The dominion it yet retains, in some degree, with an interest in the affection : and by this affection it hath the advantage of us, and often recovers too great a command. How great a power sinful self-love hath still in us, the experience of Christians sadly proves ; for the clearing whereof, consider yet again more distinctly, that

there is, as hath been already hinted, a threefold self-love, and accordingly a threefold self-seeking.

(i.) There is a loving or seeking ourselves, in conjunction with God, and in subordination to him.—This is a loving or seeking self spiritually; a loving or seeking of self as Christians, as the servants of God, and members of Christ; as clothed with the image, devoted to the service, and aspiring to the salvation of God. This self-loving and self-seeking is our duty and our excellency. The interest of self-spiritual, and the interest of God, are a conjoined interest; only the interest of self is lower, and subordinate to the interest of God. When we thus seek ourselves—our spiritual and eternal good, we are therein most effectually seeking God: we cannot more effectually seek God than in seeking our own salvation. Those that seek glory, honour, and immortality, for themselves, do therein seek the glory and honour of the immortal God; thereby declaring that they prize and value the Lord, as their chief, nay, their only good. He that, neglecting these lower things, doth seek God as his only happiness, doth therein take the crown from off the head of all his idols, and set it where it ought to be,—on the head of the Most High. By our seeking of God above all, we thereby evidently declare, that we prize him and honour him above all. Our thus seeking God, is trampling into dirt all those idols, the vanities of the world, which stood in competition with God.

(ii.) There is a loving and seeking ourselves in separation from God.—This is our loving and seeking self-natural,—the good of our persons, our bodies, and souls, without considering them as bearing a respect to God. Our seeking our well-being as mere men; our bodily well-being, our health, and strength, and natural activity; the well-being or perfecting our souls; our seeking wisdom, and knowledge, and learning, &c. :—these things are all good, and worth our seeking, in their place. Our bodily health and strength are good; wisdom, and knowledge, and learning are good; health is better than sickness, strength than weakness; wisdom is better than folly, and knowledge than ignorance: he hath more of the excellency of a man, who is a learned man; than he that is but an idiot. But

now the seeking these good things, as separate from God,—the seeking health, and not for God; the seeking strength, and not for God; the seeking wisdom and learning, and not for God;—this is a sinful self-seeking. As the Lord spake, “*Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me.*” (Jer. ix. 23, 24.) So may it be said, Let not this might be sought, this wisdom be sought, but in order to the understanding, knowing, and serving of me. Those that seek only lawful things for themselves, and in lawful and honest ways; that seek health and strength, that seek estates, that seek wisdom and knowledge, and all these in lawful and honest ways; yet, if they seek these good things, these lawful things, only for themselves, and not with respect to God;—if they seek not God in seeking their health and estates, if they do not seek God in their seeking wisdom and understanding,—this is a sinful and idolatrous self-seeking. It may be, thou mayest not be an epicure, or a drunkard, or a glutton: in thy eating and drinking thou art sober and temperate, and eatest only for thy health. It may be, thou mayest not be unjust, or an oppressor, in seeking an estate for thyself; yet for all this, thou mayest be an idolater, and an idolater thou art, if thou seekest any of these things for thyself, and not for God.

(iii.) There is a loving or seeking of ourselves, in opposition to God: a seeking self-carnal.—It is true, seeking ourselves in separation, is seeking ourselves in opposition to God; but this seeking self-carnal is in a higher and more direct opposition to God. Self-carnal is an enemy to God; and seeking self thus, is the maintaining and cherishing that enmity. He that inordinately seeks his ease, or the satisfaction of his appetite and senses, does what he can to feed and pamper that enemy, his flesh, that it may wax wanton and headstrong, and kick against God.

Now, however, every convert hath decreed, and determined to seek himself, only in conjunction and subordination to God; to seek himself in the Lord and for the Lord; yet this sinful self-love hath a root remaining in

him, which will be putting forth in sinful self-seeking. That word, "*All seek their own*," (Phil. ii. 21,) was spoken of Christians; there were such declining and such corruptions in the churches,—in the very hearts of professors,—as unhappily engaged them in this self-seeking. "*All*," that is, the most: it was a too general disease: there were many sick of it. "*And not the things of Christ;*" that is, not so heartily, not so zealously, not so naturally, as it was said of Timothy. "*He did naturally care for the things and state of the church, and of God;*" (Phil. ii. 20;) but, says the Apostle, however it was with him, "*I have no man like-minded.*" I find few Timothies among you. Whilst he is seeking the things of Christ, most of you are seeking your own things, and not the things of Christ. How much of this self-love, and self-seeking, is to be found amongst Christians, we have sad experience enough to prove. We need not go to Scripture for proof: we find too evident proof in our own hearts and lives. If we have not totally gone back from Christ to self, yet have we not suffered this idol to divide with Christ? O let us inquire a little:—

First. Do we seek ourselves and our own interests, only in conjunction with Christ, and in subordination to Christ?—Do we count nothing our own things, but what are the things of Christ? Have we heartily espoused the interest of Christ, as our own interest? Do we seek nothing in this world so, but that we can truly call it seeking of Christ? Do we seek our health, and our estates, and our safety, as the servants of Christ? Can we call our labouring in our callings, our aiming at thriving and prosperity in our affairs,—can we call this, and call it truly so, our serving Christ? If we would have health and strength, is it for Christ we would have it? If we would have estates in the world and be rich, is it for the sake of Christ that we would be rich, that we may "*honour the Lord with our substance?*" (Prov. iii. 9.) Do we mark up all we can get, and all we have; do we mark it up for Christ? Is there holiness to the Lord written upon all our houses and possessions? This house is the Lord's, and these lands are the Lord's: it is for him I have gotten them, and for him I will use them.

Second. Do we not rather seek these things in separation from God?—Seek them for themselves, for the love we have to them, for the sake of self, to whose service we devote them? Do we not seek these things, with the neglect of Christ? Is not Christ sought the less, and the more grieved for, that the world is sought so much? Is not Christ the less minded, the less loved, the more seldom thought on by this means? Does not our thriftiness and good husbandry for the world; our eating and feeding upon, our taking the pleasure of what we have here; does not this make an abatement upon our Christianity? Do we not loose much of the life, and spirit, and soul of Christianity, in our carnal things and delights? Do we not so bless ourselves in this earth, that we so much the less bless ourselves in Christ, or in the God of truth? Christians, pray consider it: how do ye find it? Hath not this selfishness and earthliness spoiled you for Christians? Of how many men's prospering in the world, of how many men's labouring for the world, may it be said, This is the fruit of these labours, this is the fruit of this prosperity,—it hath even spoiled a good Christian: he hath lost his love, and lost his life, and lost his zeal for God, in his loving, and caring, and good husbandry for himself? Pray consider, if this be none of your cases; and if this be not a sad case, and whether you can take any comfort in it or no? Had not those hearts need to be looked to, that have thus gone a whoring, (it is no better,) that have gone a whoring from Christ, after the world? Hast thou governed that heart of thine well, which thou hast suffered thus to play the harlot? Hast thou not need of looking better to it? Christians, do you not see you had need to be more watchful over your hearts, and to hold them in, under a closer and severer restraint, than you have hitherto done?

Again, if you do not see how far sinful self-love hath prevailed in you above the love of God, consider further, for conviction:—

(First.) Do you love them that love God, as you love them that love yourselves?—There is scarce any man that is so ill natured, but will love those that love himself: "*Do not even the publicans the same?*" (Matt. v. 46.)

They love those that love them, and are beneficial to them. But do you love those that love God, as you love those that love yourselves? Those that are loving, and kind, and friendly to you, you will love them, whether they love God or no; and do you find that those that love God, you can love them, whether they love you or no? If they should any of them be unkind and unfriendly to you, yet can you love them, because they love God? If not, if you can love them that love you, though they do not love God, and cannot love them who love God, in case they do not love you, what think you? Is not this an evidence, that this self-love hath greater power in you, than the love of God?

(Second.) Are you angry with those that offend God, as you are with those that offend yourselves?—The Psalmist could say, “*Do not I hate them that hate thee? Am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? Yea, I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.*” (Psalm cxxxix. 21, 22.) Can you say so?—I am angry with them that are angry with thee; I am grieved at them that sin against God; those that are his enemies, I count them mine enemies. Those that wrong ourselves, and offend ourselves; that wrong us in our names, by traducing, back-biting, or slandering of us; that wrong us of our right, by fraud or oppression; that do but speak an angry or unkind word to us,—how quickly does the fire kindle! We are too hot and touchy, when self is concerned; but are we grieved, are we offended, at those that sin against God, yea, even though they be never so kind to ourselves? Can we not wink at sin in our friends, can we not palliate and excuse it, and hide our eyes from the sins of them whom we love, and upon whose kindness and friendship self hath some dependence? How then canst thou say, thou lovest God as thou lovest thyself? Touch self-interest who dare, he shall not escape thy wrath: let him kick against God, sin against Christ, and thou art never moved! Dost thou love God as thou lovest thyself? It was said of holy Calvin, that when he heard that Luther called him devil, that he answered, But he is the servant of the most high God. It is said of Lot, “*That righteous man living among*” the Sodomites, “*vexed his righteous soul with the filthy con-*

versation of those wicked ones." (2 Peter ii. 7, 8.) Lot had none of the best neighbours in those wicked Sodomites. Doubtless he suffered many personal wrongs and unkindnesses from them. That righteous man could never be neighbour to such wicked ones, without suffering from them himself. But yet we read not, that he ever fretted or vexed at anything they did against him : their wickedness against God, their filthy conversation, this was it which vexed his righteous soul. There was a man that loved God indeed ! silent at wrongs done to himself, only vexed at what is done against God ! Is it so with thee ? Is it so with us ? O how quite contrary are we ! Vexing, and fretting, and chafing at whatever is against ourselves ; and silent, and quiet, and not moved in the concerns of God ! Is this our love to God ? Are we lovers of God more than lovers of self ? Sure, beloved, this very thing,—our being so impatient of self-offences, and so patient of offences against God,—this very thing, if well considered, might make the most of our hearts to ache, and draw tears from our eyes, and set us all weeping, to think what daily arguments we have of this kind to prove how powerful this self-love, and how weak the love of God is in us. Sure the more dear the Lord grows to us, the more will it go to our hearts, that he should be offended by any ; and the more self-love were mortified, the easier should we bear self-wrongs and offences.

And what can we say with respect to our brethren, neighbours ? Do we not so love ourselves, but that we are heartily concerned for our neighbours ? Have we compassions towards them in their afflictions ? Do we rejoice at their prosperity ? Can we grieve with those that grieve, suffer with them that suffer, and rejoice with them that rejoice and prosper ? We can be glad when God prospereth ourselves, and can we be glad when he prospereth others ? O how do men rake and catch what they can, one from another ! How do men envy the prosperity of their neighbours ! O how do some men gape after the possessions of their brethren, wishing even for their death, when they are likely to obtain anything by it ! How many landlords are glad of the death of their tenants !

How many younger brothers are glad at the death of the heir! Yea, how do some children wait for the death of their parents, that the inheritance may fall to themselves! And whence is all this wickedness? Is not this from self-love? O what murderous desires and hopes doth it sometimes bring forth! Though it dare not put upon murderous practices, though it doth not make murderous hands, yet it often makes the heart a murderous heart, and fills it with murderous desires and practices: "*Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries.*" (Matt. xv. 19.) It is this self in the heart, that is the original murderer and adulterer. You that are professors of religion, see diligently whether there be no degree of this wickedness to be found in any of you:—to hope for, to wish for, or at least to be well-pleased at, the death of others, when self doth get by their death. Therefore,

iv. There is a necessity of keeping the heart under government.—Is self such an idol in the heart? Is self-love idolatry, and the root of so much wickedness? the rot of religion? the root of unrighteousness, unmercifulness? yea, and of such murderous desires and wishes? And is there something of this root remaining even in Christians? and is it apt to put forth into such self-exaltings, and wicked self-seeking? It will certainly do so, where it is not carefully looked to, and held under severe restraint: then certainly there is no government more necessary than heart-government.

(2.) Wherein the government of the heart stands. And it stands in these five things:—*i.* In subjecting the lower faculties—the affections, appetite, and senses—to reason and conscience. *ii.* In holding the thoughts upon profitable and pertinent objects. *iii.* In exercising the passions or affections upon their proper objects, and within their due limits, and bounds, and measures. *iv.* In suppressing and keeping under the evil, and cherishing and encouraging the good, that is in the heart. *v.* In strengthening the sinews of government.

i. In subjecting the lower faculties, the affections, appetite, and senses, to reason and conscience.—Reason must be dictator in the heart, and must not be controlled

or overborne by the inferior faculties. Conscience is invested with the authority of God: subjection to reason and conscience, is subjection to God; and rebellion against these, is rebellion against God. The reason of all the disorders in the heart is, the usurpation of sense and appetite, and their rising up against reason. When the people take head against their Prince, what disorders follow? God, that said, "*Lean not to thine own understanding;*" (Prov. iii. 5;) that is, as corrupted and biassed by the flesh,—requireth us to lean to our understandings, when they are contradicted and opposed by the flesh. The prophet complains, "*There is no judgment in their goings, they have made them crooked paths.*" (Isa. lix. 8.) No judgment,—that is, no understanding, no conscience in their goings; and where there is no understanding nor conscience, there is nothing but crookedness.

Sinners' hearts do set up sense and appetite to be the ruler. As it was said of Jeroboam, "*He made the vilest of the people to be priests;*" (1 Kings xii. 31;) so sinners make the vilest and lowest of all their faculties to be rulers: they will not be ruled by reason; they will not be governed by conscience; but affection and appetite must bear the sway. How comes it to pass, that thou art such a carnal, sensual liver? Does thy reason tell thee that a carnal, worldly life, is the best life? Does thy conscience command thee to be covetous, or to be a libertine? to live at thine ease and thy pleasure? Does thy conscience tell thee, that this is the life that God would have thee to live? that God would have thee to live in the ale-house; to follow thy companions, or thy covetousness? It is not against thy conscience, to be sober, and serious, and circumspect in thy goings; it is not against thy conscience, to forbear thy lying, or thy fraud, or thy falsehood: no, it is thine appetite, and thine affections, to whom thou hast resigned thyself to be governed, that lead thee on thus.

Would you have good government to be kept within you? Set up right government. Let reason govern, let conscience govern. Make your senses and your appetites to know their place, and to keep under, and to be in

subjection to your understandings and conscience. Embrace not any thing, merely because it pleases your senses; seek not any thing, because you have an appetite to it; let not your affections lead you, but your judgment and understandings. It would be well, if we were come thus far,—to live according to the best of our understanding; and so far forth as we do so, so far we live under government: the anarchy of domineering appetites and senses is no government. Does not your understanding tell you, it is better to live in the love and fear of God, than in the lusts of the flesh? Does not your judgment tell you, that an holy, sober, serious, heavenly life, is better than viciousness and vanity? Does not your conscience call upon you, Love not the world, nor the wine, and strong drink; follow not thy sports and thy pleasures; “*flee youthful lusts?*” Hast thou not a conscience within thee, that calls upon thee thus? When thy lusts call thee after thy pleasure; when thy covetousness calls thee after the world; when thy sense calls upon thee, Take thine ease, take thy liberty; hast thou not a conscience within thee, calling thee back, and charging thee to take heed, and beware of living thus? When thy carnal will, and thy lusts, call thee from minding Christ, and holiness, and righteousness,—Let it all alone, meddle not with such a severe life;—yet hast thou not a conscience within thee, telling thee, It is best for thee to be a serious Christian? It would be better for thee if thou wouldst give thyself to a holy, humble, godly life, than to live such a libertine? It would be better for thee to be a sincere, strict, diligent, active Christian, than to be such a trifling, lazy hypocrite, and loose professor? Does not thy conscience tell thee thus, and charge thee to be such an one? Why, let conscience carry it: resign up thyself to the government of it.

ii. In keeping the thoughts exercised upon profitable and pertinent objects.—I told you before, that the unruliness of the heart lies much in the unruliness of the thoughts. And how much of the heart-government stands in the government of the thoughts! The best way to keep the thoughts well governed, is to keep them well exercised. Those legions of thoughts that are in the heart,

are like the soldiers of an army : if soldiers be not kept to action, they will hardly be kept under command. When they lie idly and lazily in their quarters, and have nothing to do, then they mutiny, and break out into disorders : sound an alarm, and bring them to their arms, and that is the best way to bring them to order.

Keep your disorderly mutinous thoughts in exercise ; and exercise them upon what they ought to be exercised upon. Be thinking profitable thoughts : be thinking upon Christ, upon the state of your souls, upon the work of your souls. Be thinking pertinent thoughts, such as are proper to your present case, such as are proper to the present season : when you are hearing, fix your thoughts intently upon what you hear ; when you are reading, think on what you read ; when you are praying, think on what you pray for ; when at the table of the Lord, think on what is before you,—upon your crucified Redeemer, upon the love, and kindness, and compassion of Christ to you, upon the covenant you are sealing, &c. Afterwards, think of what you have heard, and read, and prayed for, and received, and covenanted, &c. Do not fly off to other good thoughts that are not pertinent. Impertinent thoughts, though the matter of them be good, are unprofitable thoughts : “ *When I awake, I am still with thee.*” (Psalm cxxxix. 18.) My thoughts are with God ; as, “ *How precious also are thy thoughts to me ! How great is the number of them ! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand* ” of the sea. (Psalm cxxxix. 17.) Thy thoughts : that is, either God’s thoughts towards him, or his thoughts of God : and these, observe,—(i.) The gratefulness or acceptableness of such thoughts : how precious, how dear are they to me ! It was a pleasant thing to him to think of God.—(ii.) The multitude of his thoughts of God : how great is the sum of them ! God hath many thoughts of his saints ; and saints have many thoughts of God.—(iii.) A special season of his thinking of God,—when I awake, these are my morning thoughts ; no sooner am I awake, but my heart is in heaven ; and, “ *O how love I thy law ! it is my meditation all the day.*” (Psalm cxix. 97.) Where see, (i.) The matter of his thoughts,—the law

The business matter of thoughts

of God ; or those blessed matters, those wonderful things, contained in this law. To be thinking of the word of God, is to be thinking of God, of Christ, of holiness, of heaven, of the way to heaven, and the like things that are written in the word ; these are the matter of his thoughts.—(ii.) The season of his meditations,—and these are, every season. He is constantly thus exercised, all the day : his morning thoughts are his continual thoughts.—(iii.) The motive, or spring of his meditations,—“ *O how I love thy law !*” What we love, we shall easily be thinking of : if we love God, we shall be thinking of God ; if we love our souls, love holiness, love the word and ways of God, our thoughts will be upon them. Dost thou not think on God, and the law of God ? It is a sign thou lovest them not. Well, this is the right governing our thoughts, and which will prevent the wanderings, and stragglings, and unruliness of them,—the holding them thus well exercised.

iii. In holding our affections and passions to their proper objects, and within their due bounds, so as that we love only what we should love, and as much and no more than we should love it ; to fear what we should fear, and as much and no more than we should fear it ; to desire what we should desire, and as much and no more than we should desire it ; to be angry with what we should be angry, and no more than we should. I shall instance only in these, six passions,—our love, our desire, our joy, our grief, our fear, and our anger.

(i.) For our love.—This is then well ordered, when we love only what we should love, and as much and no more than we should love it.

The object of love is good, and only good. Nothing can be loved but that which is good, or apprehended so to be ; and nothing ought to be loved, but that which is good. God is good, the chief and supreme good ; the fountain of all goodness, infinitely good : good is the Lord ; “ *abundant in goodness and truth.*” (Exodus xxxiv. 6.) Our danger here, is not of overloving, but of underloving. God is to be loved “ *with all the heart, and with all the might :*” there is no danger here of erring in the excess. Our beings are good,—our souls and bodies : we are God’s workman-

ship ; and of God's works, it is said, (Gen. i.,) He saw that they were good. Our well-being, and prosperity, and happiness are good : not only the prosperity of our souls, —our prospering in grace and holiness, our growing rich unto God,—but the prosperity of our bodies and outward man, our health and our estates, are good :—“ *I wish thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*” (3 John 2.) The creatures are good : our bread, and our clothes, and our houses, which are for the comfort of our bodies,—“*Every creature of God is good, being sanctified by the word and prayer.*” (1 Tim. iv. 4.) The prosperity of our neighbours, especially those of the household of faith,—this also is a good that we should love. Touching our souls :—our danger is, that we do not love these according to the price and worth of a soul, which is more than all the world ; (Matt. xvi. 26 ;) or else, that we do not love them aright, so as to seek their good. Touching our bodies, and the creatures that are for the health and prosperity of our bodies :—the great danger is, of over-loving them ; of loving them more than we should, and more than they are worth. This is the order that should be in well-governed hearts :—we should love the creature, for our bodies ; we should love our bodies, for our souls ; we should love them all, and our neighbours' good also, for God ; and we should love God, for himself. And this ought to be the measure of our love :—we should love God with all our might ; we should love our souls, as far as serves the honour of God ; we should love our bodies, our health, and bodily prosperity, as far as they are serviceable to our souls ; and we should love the creatures, our houses, our money, our estates, as far as they may be useful to our bodies, in the service of our souls, and to our bodies and souls in the service of God ; and we should love our neighbour as ourselves.

A heart that is set right in its love, is a well-governed heart : this is the origin of the disorder that is in our lives, the disorder of our love. Why is it that these bodies, and our bodily prosperity, are sought more than our souls ? Why do we seek riches, and pleasures, and ease, and money, more than we seek grace and holiness ? O, we

love the creature too much, and we love God and our souls too little.

O, it were well with the sinful world, better than it is, if they loved God and their souls, as well as they love their bodies and estates. But, sinner! for thy part, thou dost not so. Thou sayest thou lovest God; thou sayest thou lovest thy soul; thou sayest, these are the great things thine heart is set upon. No: thou dost not love God as thou lovest that carcase of thine; thou dost not love God as well as thou lovest thy money, or thy pleasures, or thy health; thy very lusts, thy carnal sports, and merriment; thy vile companions, and thy sins. Thou art such a vile brute, that thou lovest these more than thou lovest God or thy soul. Thou art better pleased, thou art better satisfied, when the corn and the wine increase, when thou prosperest in this world, than with any hopes thou hast towards God for thy soul. What is the pleasure of thine heart? When art thou most merry, and best contented? When is it with thee as thou wouldst have it, but when thou art in health, and prosperest in these outward things? God is dishonoured and neglected by thee, God is angry with thee, and yet thou art well enough contented. Thy soul languisheth, it is a blind and ignorant soul, it is a sinful and guilty soul, it is a stupid and hardened soul, it is a perishing and dying soul; thy soul is in the hands of the devil; thy soul is a dead soul, even dropping into hell; and yet, for all this, thou sittest there at thine ease, and art nothing troubled at it. Thou art rich, and hast money enough,—at least thou hast a house, and hast bread enough; thou art in thy health and thy strength; and so long thou carest not, thou art not troubled about, thou wilt not so much as think, how is it with thy soul! Is not my poor soul ready to perish, and like to be damned for my sins? And wilt thou yet say, thou lovest thy soul? It were well for thee, better than it is, if thou lovedst thy soul, as thou lovest thy flesh; nay, as thou lovest thy dirty pleasures, and vile companions,—thy horses in thy stable, thy pigs at the trough, thy very dogs, thou lovest better than thou lovest thy soul:—this is the wickedness of every sinner

among you :—and where the soul is less loved, God himself is less loved, than these vile things ; yet thou wilt say, thou lovest God ! No, thou dost not love him, as thou lovest the dirt of thy heels, the lusts of thy flesh !

O wonder, wonder, sinners, and be astonished at yourselves, that ever there should be such a vile and wretched heart within you ! And yet you sit here, or go up and down the world, as well pleased with yourselves, as well satisfied with yourselves, as you are. Who would think, that behold sinners' faces, how merry they look,—who would think these merry ones should have such a vile and wicked heart within them ?

How is it with thee, sinner ? What aileth thee ? I am well, I thank God. Well, art thou ? What, and have such a devil in thy bosom ! such a wicked heart, as despiseth the Lord, and which makes a god of thy belly, or thy money, or thy pleasure ! The Lord make you deeply sensible of this wickedness ; for it is certainly your case ! It were better with you than it is, if you had loved God as well as you do the beasts that perish ; if you loved your souls, as well as you do those rotting and perishing carcases.

And for you that are Christians, who do love your souls more than your bodies, and God more than all,—yet it is so little that God hath the pre-eminence in your love, that you are hard put to it in your examination, to prove whether the love of God hath the pre-eminence in you, or no ; whether there be not something that you love more than God. It is a shame for us, friends, that the love of God is no more perfected in us ; that there is no more sensible strength of our love to God ; that we should be so often put to it, as to question which we love best, God or ourselves, God or this present world ! Well, this should be the order and measure of your love, as I said before,—That God be first loved ; next, our souls ; then, our bodies ; and after that, the creatures which are for bodily prosperity. That the creature be loved no farther than it is serviceable to the health of our bodies ; and our bodies loved in order to the service of our souls ; and all so much, and no more, than conduces to the honour and service of God. This should be the order and measure of our love, and this

The way we should love

would be one fruit of the due government of our hearts.

That I may the more effectually persuade you to set up and keep up this government in your hearts, let me ask you,

QUESTION I. Can you except against this order and measure of your love?—Order in the heart, is as necessary as order in a kingdom, army, or family; and a due order in our love, is necessary to the keeping up order in the heart.

1. Consider, Order in the heart is as necessary as order in a kingdom, &c.—What is a kingdom, if there be no order in it? What is an army, what is a family, where there is no order in it? What is there but confusion and ruin? All runs into confusion, all runs to ruin, where no order is: “*Where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work;*” (James iii. 16;) where envy and strife is, there is disorder. Good order would prevent strife and envying; and where no good order is, there is confusion and every evil work. O what tumults and mutinies are there in our disorderly hearts! There is no good doing, and there is every evil work.

2. Order in our love is necessary to the keeping our whole hearts in order.—Upon the right order and measure of our love, will follow the right ordering of all our affections. There is no one of all our affections but will be in good order, if our love be in order: if we love what we should love, we shall hate what we should hate, and fear what we should fear, and desire what we should desire, and grieve for what we should grieve, and be angry only at what we should be angry; and when there is a due measure in our love, where we love as much as we should, we shall hate as much as we should, and fear, and grieve, and rejoice as much as we should, and no more. The motions and workings of all our affections do follow and flow from the working of our love: as when we love God, we shall hate, and fear, and grieve, for all that is contrary to God; so, when we love God as much as we should,—that is, above all, and with all our hearts,—we shall desire him above all,

and hate and grieve for sin, which is contrary to God, with all our hearts.

The reason why we hate not sin as we should, why we fear not sin, and grieve not for sin,—the reason why we desire no more after God, why we desire grace no more, and holiness no more, is, because we have no more love to God and his holiness. The reason why we love that we should not love, and desire and fear what we should not; the reason of our carnal griefs, and worldly sorrows,—those sorrows that bring death, (2 Cor. vii. 10,)—is, because we duly love not God. More love to God would help and heal those inordinate passions: you would never be lovers of this self, of this flesh, of this world, of these pleasures, did you duly love God and the things of God. You complain of the unruliness of your passions,—of your frettings, and vexings, and the unquietness of your hearts. You complain of the hardness of your hearts; you cannot hate sin as you should, nor mourn for sin, nor fear it as you should: this you say is your affliction, and you know not how to help it. Why, do but get more love to God, more intense and ardent love to Him, and his holiness, and you will find all these distempers depart. Then you will hate, and fear, and mourn for sin as you ought; there will be an end of your complainings of hardness of heart,—that you cannot fear, nor grieve, nor mourn for sin; there will be an end of your complainings of your over-loving the world, of your unreasonable passions, and frettings, and anger, at what you should not, when once you are brought duly to love the Lord.

Well, by this you see the order in the heart, and especially the due order and measure of your love that is necessary, and how necessary it is! Can you, therefore, except against this order and measure of your love? What should be first and chiefly loved? Wilt thou not say, That God should be he? Which should be most in our love,—our bodies, or our souls? Will you not every one say, O my soul, my soul is of more worth than my body, and more worthy of my love? Which should be more loved, your bodies, or your estates, and the creatures you enjoy? Surely you would all say in this, as Christ said, "*The life*

is more than meat, and the body than raiment." (Matt. vi. 25.)

What would you think of such a man, that loves his money more than his own body; that would suffer his body to starve and pine, rather than spend his money upon it?

You would say, this man is a monster! And is not he as great a monster, who loves his body more than his soul, or himself more than God, as he who loves his money more than his body? Christians! would you not count it well with you, if your love were thus regulated? What if you could now feel that which you have so often questioned and doubted,—whether it be so or no, that you can now love God above all, that the whole stream of your love did run into the ocean? If you could feel such strong, and such lively, and such passionate workings of your hearts towards God,—such attachment and such tenderness, and such strength and ardency of affection to the Lord; if you could feel your hearts burning within you, with the divine love; if these hearts were all flaming hearts, and flaming upwards, and that so sensibly and so strongly, that there might be a resolving of that doubt, and you saw it true beyond question, and you could say, Now I feel who hath mine heart:—none but God, none but Christ! "*Whom have I in heaven but thee?*" there is nothing in the earth that I love in comparison of thee! God is the love of my heart, and my portion for ever!—

What, if you could now feel it thus within you? What if from your own sense and experience, you could heartily speak out such words? Take this heart to thee, O Lord! Thine it is; thou art mine only love, and nothing will I love or regard, but in order to thee! Would you not bless yourselves in such an experience? Would it not be marrow and fatness to your souls? Would you not rejoice in the Lord, and triumph in Christ? and praise his holy name, that had wrought you to that pass? That God should have thus gotten to be the chief in your love; and self, and flesh, and the whole world, were brought to stoop and stand aside, yea, and to be trampled on, in comparison of him? Surely you that are Christians, would count it to be happy with you, if it were thus: and I dare say concerning you, this is it you pray for, and

hope for, and wait, and thirst, and long after; and would count it an infinitely greater matter of joy and praise, than if the corn, and the wine, and the oil,—if all the pomp, and pleasure, and grandeur of the world, were increasing unto you, and were rolling in upon you: and therefore you for your parts have nothing to except against this order and measure of your love.

QUESTION 2. But how is it with you?—If it be an excellent thing, if it be a blessed thing to have our hearts brought into such a frame and order, what do ye find? Are you made partakers of this blessedness? O, the Lord help me, I am far short of it! I can feel that I love this world. I need no trial whether I love this flesh or no; whether I love my credit or no; whether I love my money, or my lands, or mine ease, or my pleasures. I feel I love these things: but whether I love my soul as I ought, whether I love God as I ought,—there is my great doubt; and I fear I do not! Dost thou fear, dost thou doubt whether thou lovest thy soul, as thou lovest the world? whether thou lovest thy God, as thou lovest thy flesh? And is there anything but need then, that thou shouldest be brought to a better pass? Canst thou be quiet, canst thou be comforted in anything, whilst it is thus with thee? Christians, would you ever be clearly satisfied concerning your eternal state, that you shall hereafter dwell in the eternal love? Would you be comforted touching your present case, that God is your God; that Christ is your Jesus; that the covenant, and the promises, and the mercies of God are yours; that you are passed from death to life; that your names are written in heaven, and that you are enrolled amongst the saints, and shall have an inheritance with the saints in light? Then set hard on, for this blessed frame of heart. Let it henceforth be the great thing in your eye: look for it, pray for it, reach forth towards it. Down with this world; tread upon this earth, and flesh; love nothing but what God would have you love, love nothing but in subordination to God. Dread the encroachments of the creatures upon the right of God; despise these carnal pleasures, despise this money, and

these lands, or this credit, so far as they stand in competition with God : set your foot upon the necks of them all : give your hearts unto the Lord, and let him be your love and your delight, and your portion for ever.

(ii.) For our desires.—In this, as in the former, we must desire what we should desire ; and as much as, and no more than, we should desire it. The object of our desires, is the same with the object of our love,—that which is good.

Now, of all the good which may or ought to be desired, *i.* Something is to be desired absolutely and ultimately ; and thus God is only to be desired.—*ii.* Other good things are to be desired absolutely, but subordinately ; and thus the first grace is to be desired, and the everlasting happiness of our souls, absolutely, but subordinately. We are to desire our own blessedness, but chiefly that therein God may be glorified.—*iii.* Other good things are to be desired in subordination, and with submission. Thus, the higher degrees of grace, the best and most advantageous means of grace, gifts, the gift of prayer, gifts for edification, &c.; these are all to be desired with submission to the will of God. The first grace, or saving grace, we are not to desire with submission, so as to be content to be denied it,—no, not to the will of God ; for there is no such will of God for us to submit to. God would not have any man to submit to it, to be for ever left an enemy or a reprobate from himself. God would not have any man content to be damned ! Indeed, the worst of sinners must be silent before God, though he damn them for their sins ; and not charge God foolishly, but acknowledge that he is righteous in damning them : but they are not required to submit or be content to be damned. The first grace, sincerity in grace, is to be desired absolutely ; but as to higher degrees in grace, the gifts of grace, the means of grace, &c., these are to be desired, but only with submission.

iv. Other good things must be desired with submission and moderation : thus all temporal good may be desired.

(*i.*) With submission.—We may and ought to desire our bodily health, our life, and our prospering in the world : but this must be put in,—if it be the will of God, and for

the honour of God ; and if it be the will of God to deny us therein, we must submit. (ii.) With moderation.—We should not desire great things for ourselves, nor anything too earnestly. We may seek outward good things, but with great indifferency : we must not be greedy seekers. Greediness notes, First, A desire after much : it is not a little that will satisfy the greedy mind. Second, An eager desire, a greedy appetite, is a ravenous appetite, which scarce anything will satisfy or quench ; and such an appetite we must not allow in ourselves after these temporal things.

We must desire an increase of grace, yea, and of the gifts of grace, earnestly : "*Covet earnestly the best gifts.*" (1 Cor. xii. 31.) We must not be content with a little grace. Though we must submit to God's dispensation, we must not so submit to be of little faith, as not to seek, and seek earnestly, for an increase. Yet so far we must submit, as to be without murmuring ; yea, and to be thankful for that little we have. Reach forth to the things that are before ; press hard on towards the mark ; be zealous in contending for the highest degree of grace and holiness : yea, and also as to the gifts of grace, the apostle exhorts, "*Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.*" (1 Cor. xiv. 12.) Those that do not press on after an increase in grace, manifest a sign they have no grace in them that is true : here, he that is content with a little, evidences that he hath nothing. Let your eye be upon getting up to the highest form of Christians, so as to excel and shine forth most gloriously in the grace of God ; but if, notwithstanding all your endeavours, you still fall short, and it continue to be low with you, murmur not against God : blame yourselves that you have no more. There is the fault, you are not straitened in the Lord, but in your own bowels, in your own narrow hearts. Yet still as little as you have, be thankful that there is something of the grace of God in you : if ye be some of the lowest of the servants of the Lord, yet bless him that you are his servants, still contending and striving to rise and increase more and more.

This increase of grace, and of the gifts of grace, is to be desired with submission, but earnestly. In seeking after

temporal good things, there must be not only submission, but great moderation: we must neither seek much of them, nor be over eager in our desiring of them.

From what hath been said, will follow these three directions for governing your desires:—(First.) Quicken and enlarge your desires after God and the good things above, and desire them as much as you should. (Second.) Curb and limit your desires after the good things below, and desire them no more than you should. (Third.) Crush and crucify your desires after the evil and hurtful things below, and desire them not at all.

(First.) Quicken and enlarge your desires after God and the good things above, and desire them as much as you should.—Fear not transgressing in the excess: you cannot desire God, or his grace, too much. Enlarge your desires.

First. Desire to have as much as you can.—Desire as much of God, and as much grace, as possible; seek great things for yourselves here: the more of God you can get, the more blessed are you; and the more grace you have, the more of God you have. Desire to abound and to excel in the grace of God. Get as much likeness to God, as much love to God, as much faith in God, as much sense of the love, and goodness, and kindness of God, as your hearts can hold. The apostle prays for them, “*that they might be filled with the knowledge of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*” (Col. i. 9;) and “*strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power.*” (Verse 11.) What is his desire for them, let be your desire for yourselves,—that you may be filled with the knowledge and grace of God; that you may be as full of God, as sinners are full of the devil; that you may be as full of love, as sinners are of lust; that you may be as full of holiness, as they are of wickedness. Sinners are full of sin: “*O thou full of all subtilty and guile.*” (Acts xiii. 10.) The devil fills their hearts: “*Why hath Satan filled your hearts?*” (Acts v. 3.) Get your hearts emptied of the devil’s fulness, and to be filled with all the fulness of God. Let this be your desire, Christians!—not merely to have something of God, something of the grace of God: let not a little content you:

seek to have all grace to abound in you : let this be your ambition,—to get up to be the best of Christians, the chiefest of saints, the least and lowest in your own estimation, but the highest in the grace of God : seek as much grace as possible.

Second. Desire God and his grace with as much earnestness and intention of soul as possible.—Let your desires be large desires, and let them be ardent desires ; let your hearts burn in love, and burn in holy desires after God : let this be the one thing you desire, "*One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, and behold the beauty of the Lord.*" (Psalm xxvii. 4.) Here note,—Firstly, God and all the things of God, are but one thing ; and our desire after all these, is our desiring but one thing. In desiring God, we desire the grace of God, and the means of grace, and the delights and comforts of God ; and our desiring grace, and the things of God, is desiring God : to desire God, and to desire grace, is one and the same thing.—Secondly, The saint's desiring God and his grace, are strong desires : the fixing of the desires upon one thing, notes the intention of our desires. When the whole stream runs in one channel, and towards one point, it runs more strongly ; when the heart is divided betwixt many things, God hath something of the desire, and the world also hath its part and share with God,—its motions are the more weakly towards him. O stir up and quicken your desires after God : and that they may be quickened into more strong desires, unite them ; let all your desires be after this one thing, the grace and good-will of the Lord.

Christians, let me ask you, What would you have ? What is it you desire ? O let the Lord be my God ! let me have grace from the Lord ! But what of God, and how much of the grace of God, would content you ? It may be some of you would answer, O, if it were never so little ; if I could have faith, though it were but as a grain of mustard-seed ; if I could get anything of God, in my heart ; if, by the grace of God in me, this heart of mine might be but as a bruised reed and smoking flax ; if I might get anything that God would not despise, this should satisfy me. It is

true, the least degree of saving grace, the least beam of the divine light, the first springing of the life of God in us, the least spark of his holy image,—our desires should be so far fixed on this, that nothing short of this, nothing short of the truth of grace, should, in the least, suffice us; and we should be thankful for the very first grace, if we should never have any more, or rise any higher. But are there not some that would have this, and care for no more? that bound and limit their desires to the first and lowest degrees of grace? This desire is not the desire of the children of God: thou mayest go to hell with such desires after God: he that desires not to be perfectly holy, is not sincerely holy.

Do you desire God? Do you desire grace? Stir up and enlarge your desires: let those narrow hearts open their mouths-wide. Be covetous Christians; covet much, and covet earnestly these best of gifts. Say, with the Psalmist, This one thing I desire: nothing but God, nothing but grace! Take corn and wine who will; take the gold and the silver who will: let the Lord God be mine, and that shall suffice me. Desire God only, and follow after God fully. "*My soul followeth hard after thee.*" (Psalm lxxiii. 8.) Friends, you have some wishes and some weak desires after the Lord: O quicken up these fainty hearts; look oftener before you, how worthy the Lord is of all your desires; what a jewel, what a treasure the grace of God is. Look oftener heaven-ward: get a sight of God and his glorious treasures: live more in the contemplation of his glory and goodness. It is the sight of the object that must kindle and quicken desires: you that have cold hearts heaven-ward, it is a sign your eye is little in heaven. Believe it, some clearer views of the love, and goodness, and holiness, and kindness, and glory of the Lord, would wet your appetites; would put life into those dull desires; would make you hungry souls, and thirsty souls, and longing souls. O look oftener upward! Dwell in the mountain of spices; get some taste and relish for the goodness of God, by being more constantly conversant with him; and this will set abroad all your vessels: your souls would stream forth in the words and sights of the Psalmist,—"*As the hart panteth*

after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." (Psalm xlii. 1.)

(Second.) Curb and limit your desires after the good things below, and desire them no more than you should; particularly,

First. Desire not over much of them.—The best food, the best physic, if we take too much of it, becomes hurtful and pernicious, when the stomach is overcharged; and so, when the heart is overcharged, it surfeits, and suffereth prejudice by what it hath received. That prayer of Agur should be the desire of Christians, "*Feed me with food convenient*:" (Prov. xxx. 8:) a convenient habitation, a competent portion of earthly things, should be the proportion of our desire. O, if men knew what was enough, and when they had enough, it would prevent the extravagancy of our desire! "*Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not.*" (Jer. xlv. 5.) Thou canst not bear great things: great possessions are great temptations. Seek no greater things than thou canst bear: a ship that hath more than its load, will sink and drown. The journey or voyage of the heart is upwards: you are travelling heavenwards: this earth, the more you have of it, presses you downward, and hinders you ascending. O how much nearer heaven might some of our hearts have ascended,—how much nearer to God, and to glory, might we have attained, had we not been clogged with the things of earth! Some men are too rich, and too prosperous in this world, to be spiritually-minded. Great estates bring great cares, and encumbering business, so that they cannot be at liberty nor at leisure to think on God or their souls. Desire only so much of the world, as is best for you: and that proportion is best for you, which will help you heavenward, and least hinder you. Know what is a competency, and desire no more. That is not a competency which is enough to satisfy your appetite. You will never say you have enough, if you will stay till your appetite say, *It is enough.* This is like those two daughters of the horse-leech, that still cry, "*Give, give!*" (Prov. xxx. 15;) get, get! and never say, *It is enough.* That is not a competency, which will satisfy your appetite,

but that which will comfortably serve your necessities. Know what is a competency, and desire no more.

Second. Desire them not over-earnestly.—Be not over-hungry and greedy souls: desire but a competency, and desire it moderately. That you may not over-desire these earthly good things, do not over-prize them. Carry it towards the good things below, as sinners carry it towards Christ, and the good things above. How do sinners carry it towards Christ? They make light of him; they see “*no beauty in him, that they should desire him.*” (Isa. liii. 2.) See as little beauty in the world, as sinners see in Christ; make as light of the good things of the earth, as they do of the good things of heaven; and then your desires will be as cold after these things, as theirs are after Christ. O, if Christians did desire this earth no more than sinners desire heaven, how mortified would all their earthly desires be!

Mortify your inordinate desires after the world, quench your thirst after the good things thereof, or else these desires will mortify and quench your thirst after God. Christians, you would fain love God more: it is your affliction, that your affections to things above are so dull, and so flat, that you have no more strong and working desires heavenward! Abate your desires after things below, and then they will rise more to the things above: never look to love God more than you do, till you love the world less than you do. Do ye mean to hold up at this height, in your carnal desires? Will you not set bounds to your earthly appetites? Then count upon it, God is like to have but little of your hearts. Of so great consequence is the bounding and abating of your worldly desires, that if ever you would love, or desire, or seek God more than you do, you must strike sail, and drive on more moderately, and more mortifiedly, towards the world.

Love this world less, and you will desire it less; desire it less, and you will seek it less; seek the world less, and you are like to be in good earnest seekers of God. Quench your thirst, friends; quench your thirst after these stolen waters: drink deep draughts of the water of life, and you will no longer thirst so after these puddle-waters. “*Who-soever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never*

thirst;" (John iv. 14;) that is, after these carnal things. You who have such thirsty souls after the water of your own cisterns, it is a sign that you are little at the fountain of living waters. Thou hast not drunk of the rock of the wilderness, who so lustest after the rivers of Egypt. Christians, dwell more at the spring-head; drink of the fountain; let out your desires more after God; taste more of the sweetness of Christ; let down your pitchers into the wells of salvation; fetch in more of that living water; live more at the breasts, desire more the sincere milk of the word, and suck in that milk; drink more of the wine that is prepared in the kingdom of God. My meaning is, live more with God; feed more upon Christ; delight yourselves more in God; solace and satisfy yourselves more in communion with God; acquaint yourselves more inwardly and experimentally with the sweetness of religion; and this will be the best way to quench your thirst, and abate your desires after these carnal things. Desire them still you may, and you will, as far forth as they are good for you, and as far as your heavenly Father sees them needful for you; but there will be an end of your greedy, and ravenous, and insatiable desires. If you desire God as much as you ought, you will desire the world no more than you should.

(Third.) Crush your desires after the evil and hurtful things below, so as not to desire them at all.—The pleasures of sin, and the pomp and pride of life, and the gains of unrighteousness, desire them not at all. These can never be good for you, and therefore are not to be desired. It cannot be good to grow rich by fraud or oppression: they are cursed gains that come in that way. The pompous pride of the world, and the sinful sports and pleasures of the world,—these are the bane and poison of souls: a cup of poison is not more mortal to the body, than these cups of fornication or sinful pleasure are to the soul: and, therefore, desires after these must not be limited or moderated, but be crushed and crucified. I told you before, of two instruments of government,—*a spur*, and *a curb*: and the need and use of these in the government of your desires, as you have seen in the two former directions;—the need

of a *spur*, to quicken our desires after God and his grace ; of a *curb*, to restrain and limit our desires after the good things of the world. And now I shall tell you of a third instrument of government ; and that is, a *cross*, or a *gibbet*, to execute and crucify our desires after the evils of the world. What government can be without laws ? And what are laws without penalties ? And what are penalties if there be no execution ? There must be gallows and gibbets set up to cut off malefactors, or there is like to be but poor government. The desires after these evil things of the world are malefactors that must be cut off and crucified. "*The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me ;*" (Gal. vi. 14;) that is, my sinful love of the world, my lusting after the world : those three worldly lusts in special, —the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, these are all crucified by the cross of Christ. Moderate your desires after these good things of the world ; but kill your desires after these evil things. Dost thou desire the sinful pleasures of the world ? Art thou for a wanton or voluptuous life ? Dost thou desire the gains of unrighteousness, that come in by fraud and oppression, by shortening or detaining the hire of thy poor labourers ? Art thou for growing rich, by straitening, or starving, or ruining thy poor workmen ? Dost thou affect a proud or a pompous life ? O kill and crucify all such desires ; nail them to the cross ; hang up these malefactors ; let there not be a lust left in thee after these wickednesses, but bring it forth to execution ; let there be no such desires found alive in your hearts. Leave it to the epicures and fornicators of the world to be sons of pleasures ; leave it to the horse-leeches of the earth, to be blood-suckers, to thirst after such gain as is wrung out of the bowels of the poor ; leave it to the butterflies and wantons of the world, to affect mimical and pompous gaudery. Let Christians know no such desires ; much less allow them, and foster them, when they feel them working and rising.

And as I hinted to you but now, know that the two last directions—*curb*, and *crush*—will be easiest to be observed, if the first—quicken desires after God and grace be diligently prosecuted. And, therefore, I specially

exhort you to give all diligence: enlarge and whet your appetites after God, and the things above. Remember what I told you but now:—acquaint yourselves with God; live more in contemplation of Him; live more in communion with Him; get you into the inside of religion; keep you close by God; keep you near to Christ. Let your affection be to your Father; let your desires be to your Husband; be able to say, with the church, “*The desire of my soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee: with my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early.*” (Isa. xxvi. 8, 9.) Desire the Lord, till you can delight in the Lord: delight yourselves in the Lord, and then you will despise those desires of small things, that take up the hearts of worldlings. “*Shall I forsake my fatness?*” said the olive-tree. “*Shall I forsake my sweetness,*” saith the fig-tree, “*and become king over the trees?*” (Judges ix. 9—11.) Shall I forsake the fatness of the olive, the sweetness of the fig, and feed my soul on these brambles and wild vines, which are the lusts of foolish worldlings? “*He that hath drunk old wine, will not desire the new: for he saith, The old is better.*” (Luke v. 39.) God hath better things for you to desire: better wine, better pleasures, a better inheritance for you. O live so with God, live so upon Christ, that you may obtain a taste of his better wine, a taste of his sweeter pleasures, a taste of the fatness of heaven; and then you will the more despise this earth and the fulness thereof.

You now, that are for government in your hearts,—for the government of your desires,—take this course for governing them:—Desire God, and the things above, as much as you ought; desire the good things below, no more than you should; desire the evil things below, not at all. Get your desires after lawful things moderated; your desires after sinful things crucified. Put wings to your holy desires; put clogs and fetters upon your natural desires; and up to the cross, to the gibbet, with these sinful desires: and herein have you placed the Lord as King in your hearts, and brought your very appetites to be subject to him.

(iii.) For our joys.—For the due raising and limiting of these, I shall show,

i. The object of joy is the same with the object of love and desire.—He that loves, whatever it be, if he hath it not, he desireth it; if he hath it, he rejoiceth. He that loves God, if he can hear such a word from God, "*I am thine,*"—that is a joyful word; then he can rejoice in God. He that loveth money, or the gains of this world,—if he hath it not, he desireth it; if he hath it, he rejoiceth: his money is his joy, his estate is his joy,—such a joy as it is, a poor flashy joy, yet joy there is to him. The woman in the parable, (Luke xv. 9,) that had lost her piece of silver, when she found it, called her neighbours together to rejoice with her. Sure such a woman loved money well. Joy arises,

(*i.*) Originally from its object, or the thing loved.—It is God that is the fountain of divine joy; thence it springs and flows: therefore the Apostle prays, "*The God of hope fill you with all joy.*" (Rom. xv. 13.) There are three ways by which our joy in God is raised:—First. By contemplation.—By contemplating God, we come to see and find out what matter of joy there is in God. It brings the goodness and kindness, the satisfying and ravishing excellencies of God to our sight. Those to whom the glorious Lord is as a "*barren wilderness,*" or "*land of darkness,*" as the expression is, (Jer. ii. 31,) it is either from their ignorance, or their want of contemplating the Most High. It is a sign thou art a blind soul, and knowest not God, or that thou art a stranger to divine meditation: thou lookest little heavenward, thou dost not send up thy thoughts in search for God, who yet sayest, Where is that joy? where is that blessedness? Where is that joy? Look more diligently in the face of God; let thy soul dwell in the study and contemplation of his infinite goodness. Thou hast a glass before thee, the glass of the word, wherein his glory shineth: look more into that glass, and meditate much upon what that word revealeth of the excellencies of God, and then thou shalt see his glory, and taste his joy.—Second. Expectation and hope.—Therefore we read, "*Rejoicing in hope.*" (Rom. xii. 12.) When contemplation had discovered the blessedness that is in God, then hope lays hold

on it. This blessedness may be mine, saith the soul; and I have good hope it may be mine, and in that hope I joy. What malefactor, that is in fear of death for his offences, that should be told, There is yet hope of thy pardon, hope that thou mayest live, but would rejoice in that hope? What poor man, that is in want, that should have tidings of a rich inheritance that was falling to him, but his hope would make him sing for joy? Dost thou hear of the unsearchable riches of Christ,—of the treasures of everlasting joy, that are in the Lord God,—and hast thou hope that these will be thy riches, and thy treasures? How canst thou but rejoice in hope of the glory of God?—Third. Fruition, or the enjoying of the object loved.—And this it is which brings the fullest joy. Fruition stands,

(First.) In our actual possession of the object,—when we have what we hoped for. And there is a double possession of God, that the saints have in this life. *First.* A possession by faith.—“*He that hath the Son, hath life;*” (1 John v. 12;) that is, he that believeth in Christ, hath Christ: his faith puts him into possession; and from this, the possession of faith, joy followeth: “*The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.*” (Rom. xv. 13.)—*Second.* A possession by sense:—when we taste that the Lord is gracious; when we feel the comfortable refreshing of his lovingkindness; when the beams of his light, and the streamings of his love, shine upon and warm our hearts; when his “*light shines into our darkness, and gives us the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;*” (2 Cor. iv. 8;) and when his “*love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which he hath given us;*” (Rom. v. 5;) when we see how lovely the Lord is, and feel that he loveth us.

(Second.) In the satisfaction of our hearts with this possession.—When we are pleased, and delighted, and satisfied with his goodness. A full satisfaction of the heart will not be till hereafter. “*When I awake, I shall be satisfied;*” (Psalm xvii. 15;) and, therefore, our fulness of joy is reserved till then. But satisfaction, to such a degree there is, upon our present possession, as gives us a kind of present fruition.

(ii.) This joy arises, as from the object, so immediately from the very act of loving.—Joy ariseth from love,

First. By way of immediate resultancy.—There is a great pleasure in love: as there is bitterness in grief and sorrow, so there is sweetness in love. This very blossom of love casteth forth such a fragraney, as no man knows but he that hath it. It is a sweet and a pleasant thing to live in the love of God. He that loves God, and feels that he loves him, and that he hath him whom he loves, cannot but rejoice in him. "*Whom having not seen ye love, and believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*" (1 Pet. i. 8.) There we have, (First,) A Christian's love to God:—"Whom having not seen ye love." (Second,) His possession of what he loves:—"Believing." Believing is, as I said before, getting possession. And then, (Third,) The joy that followeth:—"Ye rejoice," &c.

Second. By way of reflection.—When a Christian, upon his review of his love to Christ, perceives that he loves him in sincerity, this is to him a token of Christ's love to him. Dost thou see, dost thou feel, that thou lovest Christ? This thy love to Christ is a token that he hath sent him into thy heart, to tell thee that he loveth thee. And when thine heart can say, "*I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine;*" the Lord is my God, my Saviour, my portion, and inheritance,—Canst thou say so?—then thou wilt add, with the Psalmist, "*The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage; therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*" (Psalm xvi. 6—9.)

And as it is with divine joy, the object whereof is God, so is it, in a poor and pitiful manner, with earthly joy, the object whereof is the good things below. This joy is raised from our contemplation of worldly things, and those carnal delights they will yield; and thereby sucking out such juice as they have, for our carnal hearts to feed upon; by expectation and hope, that these things that we may obtain, get money, get us estates, and the comforts of them; and also by our fruition of them, when we get them; our loving and taking the delight and contentment of them; and

according to what we have of these things, and the degree of our love to them, such is the joy that ariseth to us from them.

ii. I shall give some directions for the right raising and due limiting of your joy.

(i.) Rejoice in the Lord.—And let your joy in the Lord,

First. Bear some proportion, as much as those narrow hearts can reach, to that fulness, and those everlasting treasures of infinite love and goodness, which are in God for you. I could tell you something of that satisfaction and rest, which your souls shall one day enjoy in God, from the word of God; and the experience of some of his saints, will tell you much more: but when your eyes shall come to see God, then you will say, that one half was not told you. If some drops of this joy, let fall upon the saints on earth, have sweetened all the waters of Marah, turned their prisons into palaces, yea, their very stakes and gibbets into triumphal chariots; if a few drops of that joy have been so sweet, and so powerful, what will the river of his pleasures be? As the Apostle, "*These things I write,*" so these things I speak, "*that your joy may be full.*" (1 John i. 4.) Rejoice in the Lord, and let the joy of the Lord be your strength; let this joy be the strength of your hearts, and the strength or top of all your joys.

Second. Let your joy in God be raised, (First,) From the evidence of your interest in Him at present. From your sincerity in His grace, and your union with Christ. You must be in Christ before ever you can rejoice in Him. What will it be to joy in God, if He be none of yours? Satisfy not yourselves with mistaken joys. There is the joy of the hypocrite. Some there are, who upon some light touches of the word of God upon them, and some little change it makes, are all on a sudden wrapt up into ecstasies of joy: though still they remain short of the grace of God, yet they seem to be transported with the joy of God. Such joy often proves to be but as a flash of lightning, which comes suddenly, and then vanisheth into greater darkness. "*The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment:*" (Job xx. 5:) it comes on a sudden, and in a great flash, and on a sudden it is gone again. The joy of the saints is not so hasty,—it is lasting: it is not such a glorious

flash, but is solid and substantial; like a deep river that makes no great noise, when the shallow brooks make a greater bubbling.

See that the foundation of your joy be laid in peace, and the foundation of your peace be laid in grace. Get an interest in Christ, soundness of heart towards God, and sincerity of love to Christ. See to it that you be his own, that you be not hypocrites and *hangers* upon Christ, but his real members and hearty disciples. Thou rejoicest in God, thou rejoicest in Christ Jesus: but art thou of the circumcision? of a circumcised and sanctified heart? Dost thou "*worship God in the Spirit,*" as the Apostle's expressions are? (Phil. iii. 3.) Is thine heart with the Lord? Dost thou love him entirely, and cleave to him with thine heart; and serve him in thy spirit, in thine inward part, with all the powers of thy soul? If thou art of the circumcision, and thus worshippest God in the Spirit,—which are the properties of sincere disciples,—then thou mayest rejoice. Beware of trusting to the most elevated joys, that you seem any of you to have felt in religion, and the exercises thereof: you may seem to have much of the joy of God, who have nothing of the grace of God. You may carry such joys with you to the grave, and they may drop down with you into hell, and be swallowed up of everlasting sorrow. Judge not of your religion by your joys, but judge of your joys by your soundness in religion. See, then, that thou art gotten beyond an hypocrite, before thou meddle with the joy of the saints.

(Second.) From your hope of the glory of God.—Rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Rom. v. 2.) Thou that art a real Christian, it may be thou hast little sense of the sweetness of religion. Thou goest heavily under thy burdens,—the burden of thy corruption and infirmities; thou livest much in the dark; the light of the Lord is within the veil, and thou canst perceive but very small glimmerings of it; thou goest heavily on thy way, hungering and thirsting, and fearing, and fainting, and mourning over thine uncomfortable condition. Yet lift up the hands that hang down; yea, lift up your heads, you disconsolate ones. Though the light, and the love, and the comforts, and the

kindnesses of God be veiled from thine eye, yet let thine hope enter into that within the veil. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me?*" (Psalm xlii. 11.) Why, how can it be otherwise? Where-withal may I be cheered and comforted? Why, "*Hope in God; hope in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the light,*" &c.

Let these two directions go together:—*First*. Let the foundation of joy be laid in sincerity of grace. I can never bid thee rejoice, till thou be persuaded to be a hearty Christian.—*Second*. Let your supply of the want of joy in sense, be made up from the joy of hope. If thou art a stranger to all present joy, yet if thou art not a stranger to love, thou hast this hope to cheer thee,—that thou shalt verily see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

(*Third*.) From your increase in the grace of God.—They are ordinarily the stronger and more grown Christians, who can sincerely rejoice in God. Younger Christians are often mourners, and do but go on lamenting after God. It is true, there are some young converts, or that seem to be such, whose joys meet them at the very entry of Christianity; who, at the very first, being wrought upon, seem to be all in a flame of love and joy. "*I remember the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thine espousals;*" (Jer. ii. 2;) who have a bright morning of it, and a beautiful and fair sun-rising. It were well if they would hold; but, after a while, clouds gather, and it is darker with them at noon, than it was in the morning. Their joy fails, and their love sinks: clouds of corruption overspread both their joys and their hope. However it may be with some beginners, (and it is never so well as they think, if it do not hold,) however it may be with some beginners, yet, ordinarily, they are only the grown Christians who are partakers of solid substantial joy; for a great part of their time it is as Zech. xiv. 7, "*It shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light.*" In our first time, it must be said only, as Psalm xcvi. 11, "*Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.*" This joy is sown in sorrow, and sown in tears; but as we

grow up, what was sown in our infancy, breaks forth and shines in our age.

Friends, dote not too much on your morning, infant joys: they may vanish into darkness! It is the solid joy of the grown Christian, that is usually the abiding joy. Therefore, if you would not be put off with some short fits of joy,—if you would have that standing joy which no man can take from you, set your hearts to it, to increase in the grace of God. Be thriving Christians: grow in grace, and grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; and then your joy shall abound and abide. Friends, you now go on drooping, and doubting, and fearing: you have many a sad day of it: but would you see good days? Would you have your cloudy to become clear days? Would you have more sunshine upon your hearts? Then get the Sun of Righteousness to rise higher in you. Misty mornings, as the sun riseth higher, the mists are dispelled, and the day groweth clear at noon, which was so dark before.

Christians, how many arguments have I used with you, to persuade you to press on after an increase in grace,—after a more spiritual and heavenly frame of heart and life? What success have former persuasions had? Are you grown? Are you improved? Or do you set your hearts upon it? Are you reaching forward? Or do you contentedly keep at a stand, and seem to grow backward, and lose your former life and vigour? What shall I say to you? What may I do for you, to nurse you up to a higher stature? We live in a declining age: everywhere there are sad complaints, that religion is at a stand, and growing to decay. How is it with you? Are there any lively souls among you? Do you get ground, does your light break forth? Do your ways, as the path of the just, “*shine more and more unto the perfect day*?” (Prov. iv. 18.) Friends, pray inquire, one by one, Is it thus with me? Is it thus with me? If I might but prevail with you, to set your hearts to it, O what a Goshen might we be, in comparison of the dark places of the earth! Whilst there is such sad darkness in most places of the land, yet, in this Goshen there

would be light. O might we see more of the light of grace in you, we should surely see much of the light of joy! If the soul of hearty Christianity might gather more strength within you, and bring forth more fruit without; if you would tread upon this earth, blow off these ashes, blow up the coals, shake off this sluggish sleepiness of heart; if we could get these cold hearts to be warmed once, would it not be a joy and rejoicing to us? Be persuaded, friends, to set-to sowing more joy for yourselves. Whilst sinners are sowing tears for themselves, and sorrow and lamentation; (this they do in their carnal merriments; carnal mirth is but the seed of sorrow and misery: as light is sown for the righteous mourners, so darkness is sown for rejoicing sinners; and their rejoicing is the seed of that darkness: and when they come to suffer everlasting misery, they do but reap the fruit of their sinful jollity;) whilst sinners are sowing tears, let Christians set-to sowing joy to themselves. Do what you can to make your last days your best days, and every day brighter than other. Do not barely wish it were better, and hope for better; but work for better days. Desire more earnestly, pray more heartily, look more desiringly, and labour more painfully for a visible and sensible improving and advancing in the power and spirit of religion and godliness; and then your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you.

Beloved, I have but two works to do among you all, whereunto I labour, and strive with you in the Gospel. But these two works I have to do:—to fetch in those that are without, and to fetch up those that are within. Sinners, you that are yet without,—without Christ, without the covenant of God; who are yet in your sins, in your ignorance, in your impenitence, and hardness of heart; strangers from Christ, and aliens from the life of God;—my work with you is, to preach you into Christ; to preach you in by repentance. I travail in birth for you, that Christ may be formed in you. Might I prevail in this work, might any more among this company of poor sinners of you, be brought to repentance, and be converted, O what joy would there be in this! “*There is joy in heaven*

over one sinner that repenteth;" (Luke xv. 7;) and there would be the foundation of joy laid in your hearts. Come, sinners, come to Christ, the fountain of your joy, and your hope! Come, and be humbled with Christ, and you shall be exalted with him; come, and mourn with Christ, and you shall be comforted; come, and repent, and you shall also rejoice!

But if I should not prosper in this work,—if sinners should continue to be hardened, and refuse any more of them to come in; if I should not fetch more in,—yet let me bring up those that are within: you that are come in, come up higher. Stand not always at the threshold: content not yourselves with the lowest place. Friends, sit up higher: ascend! ascend! ascend in your aims, ascend in your desires, seek to be better Christians daily, more experienced Christians, more mortified Christians, more lively, and active, and fruitful Christians; and then look for it, you shall be more joyful Christians. Get you to be more strong in the Lord, and the joy of the Lord shall be your strength.

(ii.) Rejoice not in iniquity.—Charity doth not, and therefore Christians must not, rejoice in iniquity. (1 Cor. xiii. 6.) Let not your sin make you merry: if it does, that which now makes you merry, will shortly make you mad with anguish and indignation at your own folly. Merry sinners are all fools! And some of these fools will be always laughing: but we must say with Solomon, "*I said of laughter, It is mad.*" (Eccles. ii. 2.)

(iii.) Rejoice not overmuch in any of the good things below.—We may rejoice in our outward good things. "*Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted;*" (James i. 9;) that is, let the poor rejoice, when he is made rich. Poverty is an affliction; and riches are a mercy, and such a mercy as we may rejoice in. But though we may rejoice in every outward mercy, yet we may not rejoice overmuch in them. Particularly for the limits of this joy, they must be such as these:—

First. Joy not in any of these good things, as if they were your happiness.—They may be means to our happiness, but must not be made the matter of our happiness. To

make our estates our happiness, is to make them our God, and the way to make us miserable : he is a miserable rich man, who maketh his riches his happiness.

Second. Joy not so much in them, as to rejoice ever the less in God.—You have as much need of God, in the greatest plenty and prosperity, as you have when you have nothing ; and you should so much thirst after the joy of God in your greatest worldly joy, as in your sorrow. — Take not your worldly joy, instead of joy in God ; think not to supply your want of joy in God, by the abounding of worldly joy. You may as well feed your soul with meat and drink,—you may as well provide for your souls by your money or estates, as comfort them by that joy that ariseth out of these earthly things. Souls must have a God, the comfort of God, the joy of God, to refresh and support them. That soul is a carnal soul, that can feed upon carnal joys. You nevertheless need the joy of God for any worldly joy ; and you must look to it, that your worldly joys be never to that height, as to lessen your esteem of the joy of the Lord. The joy of God will quench your thirst after the world ; and then the joy of the world exceedeth its bounds, when it quengeth your thirst after God, and the light of his countenance. Thou art rich, thou art full, and prosperest in the world ; thy bull gendereth, and faileth not ; thy cow calveth, &c. ; thy oxen are strong to labour ; thy sheep bring forth thousands, and ten thousands in the streets ; and now thou hast heart's ease, and rejoicest in thy portion. But how standest thou now in respect of God ? Is God ever the less needed ? Is God ever the less loved ? Is the joy of God still thy chief joy ? Or dost thou not even forget that thou hast a God, or a soul, and leave it to them that have nothing below, to rejoice in God that is above ? What thinkest thou of thyself ? Hath this earth eaten up heaven ? Hath the joy of this earth swallowed up the joy of the Lord ? Sure it hath transgressed its bounds. It may be thou wilt say, as the Prophet, and it is well if thou canst say so, "*Although the fig-tree shall not blossom,—yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*" (Hab. iii. 17, 18.) When thou art poor and in want, and hast nothing left thee

in the world to comfort thy heart, then thou wilt look to the Lord, and he shall be thy joy and thy comfort. But how is it with thee when the fig-tree doth blossom, when thou livest in the abundance of all things? Dost thou then feel thou hast as much need of God? Dost thou then take as much joy in God? Canst thou say of all here below, These are miserable comforters, if God be not my comfort; these are miserable pleasures, if God be not my joy? This is something, and thus it should be.

Third. Rejoice with trembling.—That is the Psalmist's counsel: "*Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*" (Psalm ii. 11.) In allusion to that, let me say, Seek the world with fear, and rejoice in the world with trembling: let fear be a bridle to prevent the excess of your worldly joy. Fear! What should we fear? Why, fear lest you should forget God; lest that which is your joy become your snare, and turn you aside from God; lest your joy in the world, should prove worldly joy, and serve for nothing but to feed and heighten your worldly lusts. Fear lest this joy of the world should do the same by you, as sometimes the sorrow of the world does, which the Apostle says, "*worketh death.*" (2 Cor. vii. 10.) Fear lest it should kill your soul: there is nothing that does more corrupt and endanger the soul, than carnal mirth. "*Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth,*" &c.:—but what followeth? "*Know thou that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment;*" (Eccles. xi. 9;) that is, to condemnation. These joys drag the soul to the bar of justice, and thence to execution in the fire. There is scarce anything that does ripen men faster for ruin, than the mirth of the world. "*Their bull gendereth, and faileth not.*" (Job xxi. 10, 11.) There is the matter of their joy. "*Their children dance, they take the timbrel, and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.*" There are the measure and expression of their joy: they are so lifted up, that they must have the music, and their dancing, to heighten their mirth. But what is the end? "*In a moment they go down to the grave,*" and thence into the bottomless pit.

O, the madness of this merry world! that can see nothing in God to joy in, and yet can rejoice in a thing of

nought ; that undo themselves by their own felicity, their joy and mirth ! Joy is the sweetest flower that grows in that garden, the heart of man : and this flower must be the poison to kill them, and is never sweet to them but when it grows out of a dunghill,—out of their fleshly lusts. What multitudes have surfeited, and died of their carnal mirth ! And yet foolish souls will never fear it ! but this must be their only heaven, which leads to hell ! What do these carnal joys serve for, but to corrupt men first, and then to confound them ? Worldly sorrow, it is said, worketh death : but it may be said of worldly sorrow, and mirth, as of David and Saul,—Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands : worldly sorrow hath slain many, but nothing so many as carnal mirth. Whilst saints wade through temporal sorrows, to everlasting joy, sinners pass through their worldly joy, to everlasting sorrow. “ *Behold, all ye that kindle a fire,*” &c. (Isai. l. 11.) Here, (First,) Sinners have their fires.—That is, to comfort, and cheer, and warm their hearts. These, their comforting fires, are their joy and jollities. (Second.) Sinners’ fires are of their own kindling.—Their comforts come not from God, but they raise them up to themselves : they comfort themselves, and cheer themselves, but are not comforted of God. (Third.) Sinners’ fires are all sparks.—A spark will not warm, and will not last. The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment. (Fourth.) Sinners live in their own light.—In the light of their own fire and sparks. Walk in the light of your fire : that is all the light you have. It is all dark to them from above : the sun shines not ; the candle of the Lord gives them no light ; God speaks terror and trouble to them, but they speak peace to themselves ; their own joy and mirth is all they have to comfort and cheer them. (Fifth.) Sinners’ light serves for nothing, but to light them down to darkness.—Walk in your light : this shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow. Sinners ! how light soever your walk be, how merry soever your lives be, yet what is your lying down like to be ? He is a wise man, that taketh care, that how uncomfortable or weary soever his way and his walk be, he may have a comfortable lying

down. "*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.*" (Psalm xxxvii. 37.) But O, ye jolly and merry souls, what is your end like to be? Remember your lying down! When your hearts are merry within you; when you live such laughing and sporting lives; in the midst of your cups of pleasure, your music and dancing, your feasting and sporting, and the jollity of your revelling and rioting; think with yourselves, What doth all this lead to? When these merry days are over, what a night am I like to have of it? When the candle of your worldly prosperity is burnt down, in what a stinking snuff will it go out? What a stink will it be in your nostrils! When your fires and your sparks will light you no longer, then they will burn you: your mirth will burn you, your pleasures will burn you. Your abused prosperity, your riches, your money, your plenty, and the joy that you now take in them, will burn you, and they will burn to the bottom of hell! Will you still rejoice in these carnal things? Rejoice with trembling. Tremble to think what the end of these things will be. "*Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.*" (Prov. xiv. 13.) If the former of these, "*Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful,*" should not be true; if you should laugh and rejoice, and know no sorrow; if it should be with you, as with those merry ones,—"*Their houses are safe from fear;*" (Job xxi. 9;) and your hearts should be as far from sorrow, as your houses from fear; if you should have all sweet, and no bitter; all sunshine, and no clouds; if the first part should not be true upon you; if in the midst of laughter your hearts should not be sorrowful; yet the latter shall certainly be true,—there shall be no avoiding of that,—"*the end of your mirth shall be heaviness.*" Hold up while you will, maintain the mirth and the jollity of your hearts while you can,—the end of this mirth will be heaviness: you shall lie down in sorrow.

Sinners, what will you choose? What would a wise man choose?—a merry life, or a joyful death? Which do you think in your judgment and consciences is the best choice?—to die in peace, to die in joy, or to die in

sorrow? How would you have it with you when you come to die? Would you then find, that all your sorrow is gone, and now your joy is come? Or would you be forced then to say,—Now, farewell all my mirth! I have seen my last of it: and henceforth nothing but sorrow and anguish for ever! Dost thou not tremble to think, What if this should be my case? Know it for a truth, there is no avoiding it. If you go on to live this merry jolly life, this shall be thy end,—thou must lie down in sorrow.

Christians, envy not the mirth of the world, nor let your hearts lust after it: you have other joys than crackling thorns will yield. You have your sorrows, while they have their mirth; but you have this advantage of the world,—(First.) You have joy in your sorrow.—As in the midst of laughter the heart is sad, so in the midst of your sorrow your heart may be joyful. (Second.) Your sorrow shall end in joy.—This shall you have of the hand of your God,—you shall lie down in peace: “*They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy;*” (Psalm cxxvi. 5;) whilst those that sow in mirth, shall reap in tears. You go on your way weeping, whilst they go on their way laughing,—yet mark the end of both! (Isa. lxxv. 13, 14.) Behold, however it be now, behold how it shall be hereafter. How shall it be? My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow, and shall howl for vexation of spirit; and ye shall leave your name for a curse to my chosen, for the Lord God shall slay thee. Now, your enemies eat, and some of you are hungry, &c. But think how it will be in the day when the scales are turned; when the sinners’ eating days, and drinking days, and jolly merry days, are over; and their hungering days, and howling days, overtake them; and you that now hunger, and are sorrowful, shall eat and drink, and be satisfied with the joy of the Lord.

O envy not, and meddle not with the sinful joys of the world: these “*strangers do not intermeddle with your joy.*” (Prov. xiv. 10.) Meddle you as little with theirs; let your God be your joy: and if he give you any subject of

rejoicing in this world, and allow you some measure of joy, even in these outward things, rejoice with trembling ; and let your fear so moderate your joy in these lower things, that you do not launch out into that carnal mirth, the end whereof is heaviness. Especially, when the matters of worldly joy increase upon you : you that grow rich, and prosper in the world, that find the world smiling, and come crowding in upon you ; that have even what your hearts could wish, and then feel your hearts to be tickled, and pleased, and delighted in your prosperity ;—then take heed, and fear lest you forget God and your soul, and neglect and lose the joy of the Lord, and your care of pleasing the Lord, in your abounding worldly joys ; and never count any such joys lawful or safe for you, but such as make you love the Lord the more, and serve the Lord with more cheerfulness and care. If you do not serve the Lord better, and walk with God closer, and bring forth more of the fruits of holiness and righteousness, in more spirituality and heavenliness of mind ; if you be not in some way the better God-wards, and heaven-wards, in the abundance of all things, than you could be, or than others are, in the want of all things ;—count that prosperity a greater cause of trembling, than of rejoicing to you.

(iv.) Rejoice not so as to forget your own sins, or your brethren's afflictions.

First. So as not to forget your sins.—(First.) Rejoice not so in the Lord as to forget your sins against God. Your joy must arise from this,—that God hath forgotten them ; but though God hath forgotten, you must remember them : they must still stand written in your own book, though God hath blotted them out of his.

First. Forget not in your joy the sins that you are guilty of, that so you may rejoice with mourning.—We are apt in our rejoicing to forget our sins. If we do not remember our sins when we are lifted up in joy, we are too apt to be puffed up with pride. Godly sorrow will be of the same use to us in our rejoicing, as Paul's "*thorn in the flesh,*" (2 Cor. xii. 7,) to prevent our being "*exalted above measure.*" That joy which killeth godly sorrow, whilst we are here, what a divine tincture soever it seems to have,

it is suspicious that it is not the right joy: the more solid joy of the saints, hath foundation in godly sorrow.

When we consider what great things the Lord hath done for our souls,—how he hath regenerated, reconciled, and called us by his grace, pulled us as brands out of the burning, and raised us as worms from off the dunghill, and made us sit together with Christ in heavenly places, clothed with garments of salvation, and made us shine forth in his image; when we remember what the Lord is to us,—our rock, our refuge, our father, our all-sufficient portion, all love and life, all bowels, compassions, and everlasting consolation; when we remember this, and therein do rejoice, we must then consider, But what have I been to him? What have I done against him, who hath done so great things for me? What an unworthy wretch,—what a sinful, polluted, and unthankful creature, am I? God hath loved me, God hath saved me; the Lord God is become my God, and herein I do, and I will rejoice. But woe is me! I have sinned against the God of mercy, and therefore I will rejoice with mourning; whilst I joy in the Lord, I will weep over my sinful, unworthy, and guilty soul. Whilst you say, with the Psalmist, “*Come unto me, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you*”—tell you with joy, tell you with praise—“*what he hath done for my soul;*” (Psalm lxvi. 16;) what a gracious God, what a compassionate merciful God, I have found him to be to me; whilst you say thus,—Come, and I will tell you what God hath done for me; you must also say, Come, and I will tell you—tell you with shame, tell you with sorrow—what my soul hath done against God. O how vile have I been! How proud, and how false to God! How many ways guilty before him, of neglecting, of abusing, of walking unworthy of his wonderful love! The Lord is my God, therein I will rejoice: I have sinned against God, and for these things I weep and lament.

Second. Not so as to forget the sins that have been conquered by us, that we may rejoice in triumph.—The victories that we have gotten over sin, will be both an advance to our joy in God, and the evidence of the sincerity of that joy. Those that are still in the chains and fetters of

lust, in whom their pride, or their covetousness, or their frowardness, doth still lord it over them, and can yet rejoice in God, it is to be doubted that their joy is a false and foolish joy,—a light from their own sparks, and no divine sunbeam. Fear that joy, and trample upon it, which will consist with slavery to lust. As the Apostle says concerning death, so should we say concerning sin,—“*Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory:*” (1 Cor. xv. 57 :) this is matter of praise, this is matter of joy. When the Israelites saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore, (Exod. xiv. 30,) then they sang a song of joy and praise. “*Rejoice not that the devils are subject to you;*” that is, that you have power to cast the devils out of possessed bodies;—rejoice not, that is, not so much in this, but “*rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven:*” (Luke x. 20 :) and that is the same with this,—Rejoice not that the devils are cast out by you, but that your sins are conquered. Victory over sin is an evidence of our title to glory. “*Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God.*” (Rev. iii. 12.)

Christians, what have you done in your war against sin? What work have you made with those lusts which war in your members? Can you tell of any conquest you have gotten? Where be the persons among you that can say,—This heart was once a proud heart, but now, through the grace of God, it is more humble; this heart was once a froward heart, but now, through mercy, it is become meek, the lion is become a lamb; this heart was once a covetous heart, a hungry, greedy heart, all earth and earthly, clogged and chained to this world by worldly lusts; but now, through grace, the clogs are knocked off, the chain is broken, and the soul is loose from the earth, and can now despise it, in comparison of God and the things above. Friends, have any of you experienced such victories? Forget them not, keep them by you; and in the day of your rejoicing in God, let your eye be upon these your conquests of sin, and this will be a means that your joy will be the more full: then will you triumph in Christ Jesus, when, with your conquering Captain, you have your enemies in chains.

Third. Not so as to forget the sins that we are in danger of, but to rejoice with trembling.—We are still in our warfare; and how far soever we have prospered in it, we have enemies still before us, of whom we are in perpetual danger: therefore, as it is said, Let not him boast, so, Let not him rejoice, that is putting on his armour, as though he were putting it off. The Canaanite is still in the land; sin lies at the door, and will be upon you, if you stand not upon your guard. Christians must build up themselves in their holy faith, as the Jews built the wall of Jerusalem. “*Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon;*” (Nehem. iv. 17;) they must build and watch, build and fight. There is an evil worm that is apt to grow out of our joy, which will overthrow and devour it; and that is, security, or secure confidence. It was this that spoiled the Psalmist’s joy, who was a better man and wiser than any of us. “*In my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved; Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong;*” but what follows? The very next word is, “*Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*” (Psalm xxx. 6, 7.) Security opens the door to iniquity, and iniquity will hide us from our joy.

It is matter of joy that we are at war with sin, and have obtained any little conquest, and have such a Captain to lead us on. Woe to them that are at peace, or in a truce with sin, and have nothing to comfort them but this, that there is a present cessation of arms, and they feel not the buffeting of Satan against them: they will quickly feel the miserable fruits of that truce. Stand to your arms, stand upon your guard; whilst you are drinking most deeply of your waters of joy, fear the wormwood that sin will cast in, to embitter your pleasant waters.

That joy which will consist with a sinful life, is no joy of God: the joy of God is holy joy; and that joy of God that leaves us secure and careless, is not like to be long-lived. Do you rejoice in God? As ever you would that joy should continue, take heed of iniquity: you go in danger while you live: it is not so clear and bright with you now, but it may be all cloudy and stormy to-morrow. If the devil can but lead you out to iniquity, he will quickly

raise such storms, as will make you forget your joy. Forget not this danger: if you do once but forget your danger, two to one but it presently overtakes you, and swallows you up.

Christians, if ever you would live in settled solid joy, you must always have a tender heart, and a tender eye, that will quickly discover, and quickly be startled at, the invasion of sin. Be watchful, be tender-hearted, and then your hearts shall rejoice; and if you would abide in peace, never live out of fear. Never live out of fear, till you are gotten out of danger; and out of danger you cannot be, till you are got to heaven.

(Second.) Much less not so to rejoice in the good things of the earth, as to forget our sins.—Thou art a rich man, thou hast a confluence of all the kindnesses that this earth can do unto thee; the sun shineth on thy tabernacle, it is all fair weather with thee; thou prosperest in the world, and herein thou dost rejoice. But, man, thou art a sinner all this while. Hast thou not great guilt lying upon thee? Hast thou not unconquered lusts remaining in thee? Or art thou not in daily danger of being turned aside from God, and led out into iniquity? If thine outward prosperity make thee glad, yet let the sin that lieth upon thy back, or at least lieth at thy door, make thee tremble, and so to tremble, as to be an allay to thy rejoicing. When, with the peacock, you spread abroad your plumes, and lift up your crest, look down on your black feet. When you glitter in your worldly glory, behold the stain that is upon all. Whatever fair outside you have, what kind of an inside have you? Is there not poverty within, whilst there is plenty without? What a poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked soul hast thou, whilst as to thine outward man thou art rich, and hast need of nothing! Canst thou, in the midst of thy prosperity, forget thy sinking and sinful soul? Canst thou remember thy soul, and will not this take thee a *button* lower as to thy carnal joy? The prosperity of the soul, and the joy that grows up out of it, need not be abated in the least by the poverty of the outward man. If thou be never so poor, and afflicted without, yet a holy soul, an upright heart, and the joy of a good conscience,

will make amends for all that: but will thine outward prosperity make amends for thine inward poverty? You, with whom all things go well in this world, yet still think on that rust that is eating your treasure; think on that moth that is fretting your garments; behold the stain that appears upon all your beauty,—the stain of pride, the stain of covetousness and carnality; the moth of envy and contention, that is eating out your hearts! Why shouldst thou be sad? carnal comforts would say. What hast thou wanting to thee? What hast thou to trouble thee? Thou hast houses, and lands, and money, and health, and friends. What wouldest thou have? Why dost thou not rejoice and make merry? Why! why, it is true all things go well with me without: I have a good estate, and a good trade, and a good house, and am in good health: but O, what a soul have I! O what a wretched heart have I! Do you ask, what I have to trouble me? O I have sin to trouble me! This pride, and this covetousness, and this guilt that is upon me! God knows, I find enough to trouble me, and to trouble me more than I am or can be troubled! Do you ask me what I want to make me merry? O, I want God; I want grace; I want more faith, and more love to Christ; I want a better heart! Matters go not right between God and me: whatever I have for this world; O how little have I for the eternal world! Can I be merry and jocund, whilst sin hath made such waste upon my inward man? Christians, do but thus remember your sins, and this will allay your carnal joys. Art thou so merry, that thou forgettest thy sins? Take heed, the time cometh when thy sins shall appear and stare thee so in the face, as to make thee forget all thy days of mirth and laughter.

Second. Not so to rejoice, as to forget our brethren's afflictions and miseries.—It is well with thee; but how is it with thy poor neighbours and friends? How many are there that are in penury, whilst thou art in plenty? How many are clothed in rags, whilst thou shinest in thy gorgeous apparel? How many are ready to starve, and die for hunger, whilst thou hast thy fulness of bread, and abundance of all things? Thou hast enough, and thereupon rejoicest; but is it nothing to thee, that there are so many

that would be glad of thy crumbs, of thy leavings, and cannot have them? Thy very dogs, it may be, have many a better bit, and warmer lodging, than some of thy poor neighbours: is this nothing to thee? When thou blessest thyself in thy plenty, then remember those for whom nothing is provided.

Forget not, in thy joy, how it is with thy poor neighbours, much less how it is with the poor church of God. "*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.*" (Psalm cxxxvii. 5.) Let me never touch the harp more, or rejoice at the sound of the organ, if I forget poor Jerusalem: if I do not remember thee, "*let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth:*" let me never sing song more, no, nor never speak word more, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chiefest joy. Friends, you that can be merry and jolly in these days, remember how is it with poor Jerusalem. Is our Jerusalem in prosperity? Doth the church of Christ flourish? Is religion and sincere Christianity countenanced and encouraged? Are not the tents of Jacob smitten and fallen? and do they not look black, and all torn and weather-beaten? It was said once, though by an evil tongue, "*How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob; and thy tabernacles, O Israel!*" (Num. xxiv. 5.) But where is their goodness? Where is their beauty? Are not the daughters of Zion all sun-burnt with affliction? It was said once by the church, "*I am black, but comely;*" (Cant. i. 5;) sun-burnt with affliction, but beautiful through grace. But may it not now be said, We are black and deformed; not only sun-burnt, but *collied*, black as a coal, by iniquity. Is there not only a marring of our outward beauty, but a failing of the very spirit and inward beauty of Christianity? Though it were once said, "*The king's daughter is all glorious within, and her clothing of wrought gold;*" (Psalm xlv. 13;) must it now be said, —Our clothing is in sackcloth, and we are become black and pale, and all withering within? Is not Christianity in most places dead at the heart? May there not be an *Ichabod* named among us, The glory, the inward glory, is departed from Jerusalem? It is well for us, if it be not thus with us; if the pale horse hath not ridden into our

inner man; if there be not death in our hearts; if our faith, and our love, and our holiness, and our zeal be not dead; if we be not grown stark cold many of us, or at least our highest pitch be not lukewarmness. Consider how it is with yourselves; but if it be better with us, (O that it were so, O that the Lord had not a controversy with us,—even with us, for the loss that we are at, and the fall that is to be seen among us,) but if it were better with us than it is, yet forget not how it is abroad, with the generality of professors among us. It is in every person's mouth, what a general and lamentable decay there is everywhere of the soul of serious Christianity. And is all this nothing with you? Is this a season to rejoice and make merry in? "*A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished: it is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth?*" (Ezek. xxi. 9, 10.) Beloved, we may read, in our decay and hypocrisy, that the Lord may be sharpening and furbishing an outward sword against us, to avenge and to punish an hypocritical nation. But the spiritual sword of the Lord is sharpened already; and what a sore slaughter hath it made! What a slaughter of the faith and the hope, of the grace and the comfort, of the love, of the humility, of the meekness, of the self-denial,—what a slaughter hath been made of all these already! How little of them is there left alive! Is there such a spiritual sword, such a javelin smitten through the heart, such a sore slaughter made of the very spirit of religion, and should we yet make mirth? Is this a season to be so merry, or so jolly in? What a woe is there denounced, Amos vi. 1, 6, against those merry ones, and jolly ones, upon this account, that they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph! And, what, should we be merry,—and so merry, as to be without sense of the afflictions, and also of the sins of Joseph? the inward languishings and consumptions of the people of God?

Christians, I doubt we have too much forgotten all this: we do not consider, we do not remember, or lay it to heart, how sadly it goeth with the interest of Christianity among us: sure it would change many of our countenances, and abate us our pleasant hours, were this duly weighed.

It is our fault and our sin, that it is thus with us ; and it is a sign that thou art of the number of those sick souls, thou art one of them. There is a sad slaughter made in thine own soul : thine heart languisheth, and thy grace is withered : it is a sign it is so, if thou canst be so merry, and not to be afflicted with the witherings of others. O friends, remember these things ; and whatever rejoicings you have in outward things, let these things be an allay to them ! “ *Weep as though ye wept not, rejoice as though ye rejoiced not,*” (1 Cor. vii. 30,) says the Apostle. I cannot say the former word to you in such a time,—Weep as if you weep not ; but, Weep as if you wept ! Weep in good earnest : weep heartily, weep abundantly : let your eyes run down with tears. I cannot say, Weep as if you wept not ; but yet, Rejoice as if you rejoiced not ; abate and moderate all your joy and mirth.

(iv.) For our fear.—This is well governed, when we fear nothing but what we ought to fear ; and this we fear as much, and no more than we should. For the regulating our fears,

i. We are to keep our hearts in a due fear of what we should fear.

(i.) God is to be feared.—The glory of his excellent Majesty, of his holiness, of his righteousness, of his omnipotence, and all his glorious attributes. The attributes are his glorious and fearful name. “ *That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, The Lord thy God.*” (Deut. xxviii. 58.) This fear of God, is a fear of revenge. To fear God, is to stand in awe of his glorious Majesty. But in special there must be a fear of the indignation of God, and the power of his wrath. “ *I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear : Fear him which hath power to cast into hell.*” (Luke xii. 5.) The fear of God is the ground and reason of all other fear.

(ii.) Sin is to be feared.—“ *How wast thou not afraid, to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord’s anointed ?*” (2 Sam. i. 14.) It was thy wickedness, thy great sin, to do that act. How is it that thou wert not afraid to do it ? Sin is the most formidable of evils. If men knew what it were to sin against God, it would make them

tremble. Not only great sins, but little sins; not only open, but the most secret sins: there is enough in every sin to make men afraid. That men are so vile, and so wicked as they are, is because they fear not sin: fear sin, and you will fly from it.

(iii.) Temptations to sin are to be feared.—Therefore we are to pray, “*Lead us not into temptation.*” It is our fear that must bring us on our knees, to make this hearty prayer. If sin be feared, then whatever enticeth or leadeth to sin is to be feared. Some of our temptations are to be feared and shunned. Evil companions are a temptation: these must be shunned. The liberty of unnecessary, sports and recreations, of sumptuous feastings, of curious and costly apparel, &c., are temptations, and therefore must be shunned. Others of our temptations are to be feared, and warily used. Riches and outward prosperity are a temptation: our money, and our lands, and our business in the world are temptations,—“*They that will be rich, fall into temptation,*” &c.; and therefore must so be feared, as to make us the more wary and circumspect in the seeking and using of them. Follow your trades with fear, go into your fields and markets with fear, eat and drink with fear; fear your fine houses, fear your plentiful and prosperous estates, lest by these you be led away to sin, and to forget God. You are every day among temptations, throughout the whole time of your lives; and therefore is the exhortation of the Apostle, “*Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.*” (1 Peter i. 17.)

(iv.) The punishments of sin are to be feared.—The wrath and the curse of God, even that everlasting death which is the wages of sin. Our Saviour said, “*Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*” He is able, and he will do it, if thou continue in thy sin. This fear is planted in the heart, as the sword of the angel was placed in the way of Balaam, to keep him back from his wicked designs. This world is a wicked world. Notwithstanding God hath placed such a flaming sword in sinners’ ways, notwithstanding all their fears, how wilfully wicked are they! But what a world would this world be, if there were no fear upon men’s hearts, to bridle or restrain them!

ii. We are to keep the heart out of fear of what it should not fear : to suppress and keep down all unreasonable and sinful fears. There are two things especially which men fear, but which they should not fear :—

(i.) The yoke of Christ.—The difficulties and severities of religion. Some men continue to be sinners, because they are afraid to be saints ; they continue under the power of the devil, because they are afraid of Christ. They look on Christ as a hard Master, his service as hard service, his yoke as a hard yoke. Some desires they have after religion : they could wish themselves Christians, but are afraid to venture. The difficulties and the severities of a godly life keep them off : they are afraid of them, that they should never bear them. As God placed a flaming sword in Eden, (Gen. iii. 24,) so these fears are a flaming sword of the devil's placing, to keep the way of the tree of life,—to keep sinners back from Christ. They dare not come to Christ for fear of him, and the heavy yoke that he would put upon their necks.

(ii.) The cross of Christ.—That is,

First. The sufferings of this life.—These are not to be feared. "*Fear none of those things which you shall suffer.*" (Rev. ii. 10.) And this very charge, not to fear them, is an evidence that even Christians are too apt to fear sufferings.

Second. Death for Christ's sake.—"*Fear not them that kill the body.*" (Luke xii. 4.) Fear not the worst that men can do. You may not only be persecuted by evil men, imprisoned, spoiled of your goods, but you may be slain, put to death by them : yet fear them not. And as a violent death, a being put to death for Christ, so neither is a natural death to be feared. Death is the king of terrors. The Apostle tells us, that "*for fear of death men are all their life time subject to bondage.*" (Heb. ii. 15.) There is a natural fear of death, implanted in every man, even in Christ himself ; and there is also a sinful fear of death : and then it is sinful, when it is excessive ; when there is so great a fear of death, as to distress and distract us in the duties of our lives ; when there is so great a fear of death, that we cannot quietly and patiently submit to its

stroke ; when we cannot comfort and support ourselves against the fear of death, by the hope which we have in death. "*The righteous hath hope in his death.*" (Prov. xiv. 32.) As the Apostle speaks concerning sorrow for the dead,—"*Sorrow not even as others which have no hope ;*" (1 Thess. iv. 13;) the same may be said concerning the fear of death,—Fear not as men without hope. The righteous hath hope in his death: he lies down in hope, goes to his grave in hope ; and this hope fortieth his heart under all its fears.

Now, friends, would you keep your hearts under government, learn this lesson,—Keep them in fear: and particularly,

First. Keep you in the fear of God.—Keep up the awe and reverence of God in your hearts: get you trembling hearts before the Lord: behold the severe and jealous eye that is upon you. Live under such a deep sense of the greatness, glory, and majesty of the great God, as may constantly awe you. Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and let him be your fear and your dread. Those that live not under an awe of God, lie open to the devil, and all his temptation. It is this, the fear of God, that is the bridle, to keep us in due order.

Second. Keep you in fear of sinning against God.—"*Tremble, and sin not.*" (Psalm iv. 4.) Art thou a professor of faith in God, and dost thou not yet fear to sin against God? Dost thou believe that God is the observer of all ungodliness? that thine iniquities are all marked before him? Dost thou believe that God is the avenger of all ungodliness, and that all thine iniquities shall be recompensed and returned upon thine own head? How is it then that thou art no more afraid of iniquity? Art thou an hypocritical professor, and does not thine hypocrisy make thee afraid? Art thou a proud professor, or a worldly professor, or a lukewarm, or froward, or carnal, or slothful professor? How is it that thy pride, thy covetousness, thy coldness, or frowardness, or carnality, or slothfulness, doth not make thee afraid? Are these evils,—this pride, and this hypocrisy, this covetousness, this frowardness, rooted and reigning in thy heart? Where are thy

fears all this while? Call up fear, put on fear; and let this suppress these lusts, which will else be breaking forth into practical iniquity. If you would fear a life of covetousness, a life of pride,—fear this heart of pride, this worldly carnal heart; if you would fear a froward look, a froward tongue, fear a froward heart,—crush this cockatrice egg, before it hatch into practical wickedness!

Third. Fear temptation to sin.—What tends to foment or heighten the lusts of thine heart? What doth use to draw them forth into practice? Whatever it be, fear it as you would fear the devil. Particularly,

Fear whatever you overlove in the world:

(*First.*) When you have your pleasant dishes before you, and a variety of them; when you have your pleasant cups before you, fear your being tempted to excess. Feed not yourselves without fear; especially feast not without fear: “*Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.*” (Prov. xxiii. 2.) “*Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.*” (Ver. 31.) Look besides it, be afraid to look upon it, lest it tempt thine appetite beyond its bounds.

(*Second.*) Fear your fine clothes, your fashions and ornaments that you delight in.—Hast thou no pride in thine heart, and is not thy pride even as tinder, that will catch fire of every spark? Dost thou love to be fine and gallant? dost thou love thy fine fashions and ornaments? Let thy love make thee afraid.

(*Third.*) Fear the money that thou lovest, and thy lands, and thy fields, and the increase of thy substance.—“*When riches increase, set not your heart upon them.*” (Psalm lxii. 10.) Do you prosper, do you grow rich in this world, do ye feel the world coming in, and your substance increasing upon you? Fear this prosperity! I do not say, fear prosperity, and shun it, or flee from it; but fear it, and look the better to yourselves: be jealous of yourselves in such a time, lest when you prosper and be full, you then forget God. Have an eye to your hearts in your prosperous estate. Take heed that your souls grow not poorer, as your outward man grows richer. It was the joy of the Apostle,—“*Though our outward man perish, yet the inward*

man is renewed day by day." (2 Cor. iv. 16.) But, friends, let it be your fear, lest as your outward man flourisheth, your inward man grow to decay; lest your riches eat up your religion; lest you lose your love to God; lest you abate in your care for the things of Christ; lest those poor souls wither and suffer loss; lest the work of God be at a stand with you; lest praying, and praising, and communing with your hearts, and looking into the other world, and caring and labouring for those poor immortal souls, be laid aside, or but slightly shuffled over. Know you, that are on a prosperous estate, that have set your hearts upon getting, and finding the world increasing upon you, know that you are in danger: your souls are in danger, your religion is in danger of sinking and withering; your prosperity is a temptation, that will endanger your neglect of God and your souls. Look upon prosperity as a temptation, and fear it as a temptation: be jealous of your hearts in such a time.

(Fourth.) Fear your vain company, your societies and communications with your carnal friends and acquaintance. Dost thou love vain company? I do not speak of vile company,—of drunkards and rioters, of swearers, and scoffers at godliness,—those sons of debauchery, that are the filth and garbage of the world; but even vain company, that are nothing but froth and folly, compliment and merriment; the unsavoury salt of the earth, that are good for nothing; to whom a serious and savoury word put in, is as "*vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes;*" and who will thereby tempt you, to turn all religion out of doors, for the time, at least, because it is so unsavoury to the company. Fear to come unto them: go not out after them: thrust not yourselves unnecessarily among them. But when God brings you among such,—when necessary business brings you in,—be with them in fear. Think with yourselves, Now I must look to mine heart: here be they that are likely to steal it away from God. Friends, settle this upon your hearts, and really believe it, and carry the sense of it upon you,—that vain acquaintance and companions are a temptation. Though they do not tempt you to drunkenness, or swearing, or lying, or riot; yet they may tempt you to lukewarmness

and indifference in religion : they will chill and cool your good affections, and dull and blunt the edge of your spirits heavenward. As holy and lively society will quicken and whet our hearts towards what is good, even as "*iron sharpeneth iron,*" (Prov. xxvii. 17,) so are we like to be hindered and blunted by vain company. Friends, would you keep your hearts in good plight? Would you keep clear of the vanities and follies of earth? Would you keep yourselves unspotted from the world? Would you shine as lights in the world, and be a rebuke to their sins? Do you, in good earnest, design to maintain the life of God within you? Then beware of these sons of vanity, and let them henceforth be your fear, and not your desire or delight.

To this, let me farther add, by the way,—Are vain company temptations, and to be feared? Then you that are Christians, look to it, that you be not of such vain, earthly, frothy conversation, that we must warn others that are better, to take heed of you, and be afraid of coming into your company. If vain company be a temptation, then take heed that you be not such, that even your society should be feared. Such a fault there is among professors: and it is a grievous thing to consider what a vain, unsavoury, and unprofitable conversation there usually is among Christians with Christians, of professors with professors! What is your discourse? How do you spend your time when you come together? How little of God, of Christ, of the state of your souls, is to be heard among you? You can talk of your trade, of your business, of news; and, what is worse, tell evil stories of others behind their backs. You can laugh and be merry with carnal mirth, even as others: but what do you more than others? Whose hearts are wont to be warmed or refreshed by your lips? It is said, "*The mouth of the righteous is a well of life. The lips of the righteous feed many.*" (Prov. x. 11, 21.) And is it so with us? What of the water of life is there, proceeding out of those wells of salvation? If there be a fountain in you, is it not a fountain enclosed, a well shut-up? Who are there whose souls are fed from your lips? If Christians met with no better feeding, than they have

from some professors' lips, they might starve and perish ;— so jejune and insipid our discourses usually are, and withal so carnal and vain, that we rather pull down than build up, we rather chill and damp, than quicken and enliven, those that are conversant with us. We have too often, like the Quakers, our silent meetings, as to anything of God that is going among us. Friends, consider ! look back and observe how it has been. Have your mouths been wells of life ? Doth there not sometimes come forth mud, instead of water ? Have your lips fed many ? May be, your hands have fed poor hungry bodies ; may be, they have had of your bread and of your money ; but what have they had from your lips ? Not a word. Their souls may perish, for all the feeding that they have had from your lips. It is said, "*Those that feared God spake often one to another ;*" (Mal. iii. 16 ;) that is, of the things of God. But is it so with us ? What shall we say to sinners, who, when we charge others to take heed to their company, will reply, Why, they were even as good come amongst us as amongst some of themselves, and as much they are like to get, and as little harm, by us as by you ?

Friends, I have more than once provoked you to be more spiritual and more heavenly in your converse ; but what hath been the fruit ? Is it better than it hath been ? O that you could tell me it was ! I thank God it is a little better ! I have set mine heart upon it, I have put myself to it, to bring forth something of what I have learned for others' benefit. I must tell you, this unprofitableness is an ill sign as to yourselves, as well as it may be a snare to others : barren lips are a sign of barren hearts. It is to be feared there is not so much of Christ within you, when there is so little coming forth ; that there is but little truth in your hearts, when there is so little grace in your lips. O, friends, that you would yet check yourselves for this neglect ! that you would yet charge it upon your hearts, to be more fruitful this way ! To what purpose are you preached unto, to what purpose do I warn you, if you will not amend ? I will tell you one way to help it :—let your own hearts be more set upon God : get more spiritual favour, more life and power of holiness in your own spirits,

and it will find an easier vent. More divine communion will be the best help to more holy communication. But this, by the way.

(v.) For our grief or sorrow. I shall show here,

i. That the object of our sorrow is evil. The evils we are to grieve for are, (*i.*) Sin. (*ii.*) Misery or afflictions.

ii. What are the due degree and just limits of our grief.

(*i.*) Sin.—This is the great and special object of sorrow: and sorrow for sin is the best and most necessary of sorrows. Sin is a grievous evil, and it most calls for grief of heart. He loves neither God nor himself, that grieves not for sin: sin is the abuse of God, and the wrong of our own souls. How canst thou say thou lovest God, if thou canst abuse him, or see him abused, without sorrow? How canst thou say, thou lovest thyself, when thou canst wrong thyself, and not be grieved? What wilt thou grieve for, if not for that which is so provoking to God, and so destructive to thyself?

Sin seems good in the eyes of sinners, and therefore it seldom troubles them; it is that which pleaseth them, and suits with their tempers; it is that which pleaseth them, and brings them in all their gains. Sinners, that must hereafter die for their sins, do at present live by their sins: they are beholden to their sins for their livelihood. Some men live by lying, and stealing, and defrauding; by covetousness and oppression: it is that which brings them in their estates; they had been, some of them, but poor men, if their sin had not gotten them estates. Others live by their pleasures, and carnal merriments: it is their mirth and their pleasure that keep them alive; sorrow and melancholy, they think, would kill their hearts. Sinners live upon their sins, and therefore will not be grieved.

But though thou thinkest thou livest by thy sins, thou must die for thy sins: thy sins are making a grave for thee, and carrying thee to it: thy sins are preparing a hell for thee, and leading thee down to the chambers of death. Thy sin spoils thee at present of all that is good, and makes thee good for nothing, but to be fuel for the fire. Holiness prepares the saints, and makes them “meet for

the inheritance of the saints in light ;" (Col. i. 12 ;) and sin prepares sinners, and makes them meet for the inheritance of everlasting darkness ; fit to serve none but the devil, fit to dwell with none but the devil. Sinners, you that go on in your sins, you are herein but fitting and preparing yourselves for the devil ! This pride that you live in, these pleasures that you live in, this covetousness that you live in, by all these, the devil is preparing you for hell ! There is a fire prepared for you,—"*everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels :*" (Matt. xxv. 41 :) there is a hell prepared for you, and your sin is, as fast as it can, preparing you for that place of torment. Your going on in your sin is ripening for wrath. Thou art almost ripe already, and art ripening every day : and as soon as thy sin hath but made thee fully ripe, thou droppest as ripe fruit use to do,—down thou droppest to rottenness, into the grave, and into the darkness of the pit. Thou art grown to that height in sin, that thou mayest be ripe before to-morrow ; and as soon as thou art ripe, thou wilt be rotting,—thy body in the dirt, thy soul in hell. This is the fruit that sinners get, and shall get at last, by their sins. "*The wages of sin is death.*" (Rom. vi. 23.) But yet, because at present they live by their sins,—their sins make them merry, their sins make them rich, they get money by them, they get estates by them,—therefore they are not troubled : though they sin, they will not sorrow. "*Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved.*" (Jer. v. 3.) It is said, with respect to the punishment of sinners, and it might be said concerning them, They have smitten themselves, and yet have not grieved.

Sin seems good in the eyes of sinners ; and therefore it doth not trouble them. But sin seems to be sin to saints ; (Rom. vii. 13 ;) that is, the greatest and worst of evils : for so sin, when it appears to be sin, doth appear to be the worst of evils ; and therefore, to them, it is matter of sorrow. When sin appears to be "*exceeding sinful,*" as the Apostle's expression is, then the heart will be exceeding sorrowful. The degrees which, by the right government of the heart, this sorrow for sin is held up, and the bounds and limits it is held within, are these :—

First. This sorrow must be so great, as to answer the end, and to bring forth the proper fruits of it.—The end of this sorrow, and the fruits it must bring forth, the Apostle tells us, is repentance. “*I rejoice that ye sorrowed to repentance.*” (2 Cor. vii. 9.) And, verse 11, “*This self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you! yea, what clearing of yourselves,*” &c. Whatever trouble for sin, whatever sorrow any of you have in your hearts, if it doth not bring forth repentance, a forsaking and turning from sin; if this sorrow doth not work a fear of falling back into sin; if it doth not work a care of preventing your fall; if it doth not work to indignation and zeal against sin; if it leave you the friends of sin still, the followers of sin still; if this be all you can say,—I am troubled at it, but I cannot help it; it is my trouble that I am a drunkard; it is my grief that I am a worldling, or proud, or froward; but God be merciful to me, I cannot get rid of these evils! If your sorrow, whatever it be, doth not bring forth fruit unto repentance, it is not wrought up high enough. There must be more load laid on: there must be more of its thorns, and spears, and stings thrust into that hard heart of thine: thou must feel more of its gripes: it must fetch out more groans, and sighs, and tears out of thee: thou must be brought to another manner of trouble for sin, than yet thou art, ere it reach the due degree of godly sorrow.

Second. This sorrow must not be so great, as to hinder the exercise of any other grace or duty.—It is seldom there is an error in the excess: we do not use to sorrow overmuch. No, no; we are apt to err in the defect. We do not usually come up to sufficient sorrow. Our hearts have but a light hurt upon them; our wounds, ordinarily, are not deep enough. It is this which mostly undoes us,—we find our sin to be too light a burden. It were well if our hearts were more sick, that we could find them bleeding inwardly, and bleeding more abundantly; as it was said of false teachers, “*They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly.*” (Jer. vi. 14.) It is seldom that we can, now-a-days, hear of such a thing as a troubled soul, and a wounded spirit. We are, even professors, of too whole and unbroken hearts.

"The sacrifice of God is a broken heart." (Psalm li. 17.) But how few such sacrifices are there anywhere found for the Lord! The work of the ministry, God help us! is seldom that more acceptable work, and healing work,—to heal the wounded soul, to bind up the broken heart, to comfort them that are cast down. But the main of our work lies, in making wounds, in pricking to the heart, in casting down the high and hardened hearts. Is not there much of this work lying upon our hands, to be hammering, and humbling, and piercing your hearts through with godly sorrow? How few are there of you, who can truly say, I thank God, this work is done upon me;—the breaking work, the afflicting work, the affrighting work, is done upon me. My heart, through grace, is brought low, and made soft, and made sick of my sins; so that I am prepared for the healing and comforting work. The sharp two-edged sword of the word hath pierced so deep, and made such work, such wounds in my heart, that now the oil is more needed, and the balm, to heal my wounds. O, it is matter of trouble and sadness of heart, to find no more such sad souls, and sorrow-bitten hearts, than we can either see or hear of in the world! It is seldom, therefore, I say, that there is too much of this sorrow,—that trouble for sin riseth too high; but yet sometimes, and in some cases, it may be so. There may be an excess of sorrow for sin: Christians may be pressed down above measure: they may be swallowed up of overmuch sorrow: as the Apostle intimates, and would have prevented, *"Comfort such a one, lest perhaps he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."* (2 Cor. ii. 7.) Therefore, in this case, there must be limits set to our sorrow; and it must be held within these limits. It must be so much only, as may not hinder the exercise of other graces and duties: it must neither hinder our hopes, nor our faith, nor our love, no, nor our joy in the Lord. It should be with Christians in this case, as with the Apostle in another case,—*"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."* (2 Cor. vi. 10.) Sorrowing, yet believing; sorrowing, yet hoping; cast down, yet comforted. It must not hinder our duties. Some Christians have been so overwhelmed with trouble, that they have not been able

to hear, nor pray, nor think with any comfort upon God, or the things of God. This is an excess of sorrow, and must be restrained. Sorrow for sin no more, than will help you to believe, and hope, and love, and praise, and serve the Lord.

(ii.) Affliction.—This is another object of sorrow. The degrees and limits of this are,

First. That we sorrow not so little, but that we have a due and a deep sense of the hand of the Lord upon us.—Otherwise we despise the chastening of the Lord, which the Apostle forbids:—“*Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord.*” (Heb. xii. 5.) By afflictions I mean here, the sufferings of this life: crosses and losses of estates, of friends, husband, wife, children, or near relations; sufferings in our persons, by sickness, pain, languishing, and the like;—these must be grieved for. God complains, “*I have stricken them, but they have not grieved.*” (Jer. iii. 5.) It was their sin that they did not sorrow.

Second. That we sorrow not so much as to sink under our afflictions.—That we be not swallowed up of overmuch sorrow. As we may not slight or “*despise the chastening of the Lord,*” so we may not “*faint*” when we are “*rebuked of him.*” (Heb. xii. 5.) The Apostle tells us, (2 Cor. vii. 10,) that “*worldly sorrow,*” the sorrow of worldly men, on account of worldly crosses, “*worketh death.*” It sometimes destroys their bodies: some men die of grief: but it often kills their hearts, sinks their spirits, stupifies, and makes them fit for nothing. We ought not to be so depressed with sorrow, but that we may still keep our hearts alive, and be of good courage.

Third. Not as men without hope.—We must sorrow for all our afflictions, but as the Apostle would have Christians sorrow for the dead: “*Sorrow not,*” says he, “*as others which have no hope.*” (1 Thess. iv. 13.) The righteous hath hope in his heart, and his hope must moderate his sorrow. This sad state will not last always: there is hope of an end of his afflictions, and that should moderate his grief. “*The righteous hath hope in his death.*” (Prov. xiv. 32.) He hath this double hope,

(First.) That death will put an end to his sorrows.

(Second.) That the end of his sorrows will be the beginning of everlasting joys: and in this hope he must comfort himself under his sufferings, and moderate his sorrow.

Fourth. Always as men that have worse matters to sorrow for.—The least sin is a worse evil than the greatest affliction, and calls for more of our sorrow. Christians must take heed that they do not lose the sense of sin, in their excessive sorrowing for affliction. When affliction lies too heavy, sin usually lies too light. “*Why criest thou for thine affliction? because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.*” (Jer. xxx. 15.) Why art thou impatient under thy sufferings? Whatsoever thou sufferest, how hard soever it goes with thee in the world, there is a worse thing than all this, that should set thee a crying: thy sin, thy sin, which is the root of all that which thou sufferest!

Fifth. Let your sorrow for affliction never be so great, as to hinder your sorrow for sin.—Sorrow more for iniquity, and that will limit and moderate your sorrow for your affliction. Why dost thou grieve so for losses in thine estate,—for thy lost friends and relations? Thou hast greater matters than these to trouble thyself about: thy sins are the losses of thy soul. Think, when thou art mourning over thy worldly crosses, as sad as they are, how is it with thy soul? Is there not sin upon thy soul? Is there not guilt upon thy soul? And let out thy sorrows so much upon the sin of thy soul, that thou mayest have none to waste upon the sufferings of thy body. Restrain thy tears for thy afflictions: thou wilt need them all to be spent upon thine iniquity. O, friends, if you were concerned for your souls, as much as you ought; if you were sensible of the mischiefs and miseries that sin is bringing upon your souls, they would make all the sufferings of this life comparatively light and little things!

(vi.) For our anger.—The government of our anger is, that which especially is meant, by ruling our spirits, in those two scriptures:—“*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.*” (Prov. xvi. 32.) “*He that hath no rule*

over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." (Prov. xxv. 28.)

The object of anger is evil: the limits of anger are these:—

i. Be never angry with God.—Some persons are so fretful, that none can please them: they are apt to be angry with every one that hath to deal with them. There is no escaping their anger, but by shunning their company, and having nothing to do with them. Men cannot please them, and God cannot please them: they will be angry with their Maker. When his providences toward them are anything cross to their humours, or their interest, they are angry at God, angry at his providence. So it was with Jonah, when God smote his gourd that had been given him for a shade. Jonah was in a pet,—angry with God; and justified himself in his anger: "*I do well to be angry.*" (Jonah iv. 9.) Some foolish persons, if it be dry weather when they would have it rain,—if foul weather when they would have it fair,—they are angry and fret; their hearts rise, murmur, and repine against the providence of God. So, when the wicked are exalted and flourish, and themselves are oppressed and brought low, men are apt to fret and murmur at Divine Providence, that thus orders it. Thence is that caution, "*Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way;*" (Psalm xxxvii. 7;) that is, fret not against God, because he suffers such wicked ones to prosper. Let God alone in his way: whatever he doth in the world, keep silence before him, and fret not, murmur not against him. To be angry with the wind, or the rain, or the clouds, or the sun, when we suffer prejudice by them; yea, or to be angry with the irrational creatures, that serve us,—with our horses, or oxen, or dogs, when they do amiss; this is often anger against God. Some are such fools, that if their horse stumbleth, or their ox sluggeth, or their dog barks, or takes what he should not, as to be angry with them. Irrational creatures are not the objects of your anger: you may strike your horse, or goad your ox, or beat your dog; but he is a fool that will be angry with them. Some are so fretful, that they will fret and chafe at senseless and inanimate creatures, which they

use. How do gamesters fret and chafe at their cards, at their dice, when they run not for them! How do some tradesmen fret at their labour, when it fadges not aright! when their yarn breaks, when their cloth shrinks, when their scythe, or knife, will not cut, or cut their fingers, or their legs, or hit upon a stone, or the like! Some such there are, that will be angry with their work, will fret at their scythe, or their knife, or their yarn, &c. These you may reckon among the first-born fools! And the folly of such anger is not the worst that is in it,—there is profaneness in it too: anger against these creatures is anger against God.

ii. Be not soon angry with man.—“*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty.*” (Prov. xvi. 32.) Some persons are so touchy, that it is hard to keep them quiet. Like tinder, or gunpowder, that will catch fire by every spark; a wry word or look, nay, their own jealous thoughts, will set them on fire: every little thing will provoke them. This is an evil and sore disease, that is with difficulty cured. You, whose temper this is, know that it is your misery. It is a miserable temper, to be of such a froppish, touchy spirit. You that are such, had need to pity the case of those that dwell with you. Look upon thyself as a brier, or a thorn-hedge; and know that the fault lies not in them thou art angry with, but in thine own angry heart.

iii. Be not angry without a cause.—“*He that is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.*” (Matt. v. 22.) The only just cause of anger is sin. “*Be angry, and sin not;*” (Eph. iv. 26;) and that you may do so, be only angry against sin. We may be angry against wrongs or abuses against ourselves; but it must be upon this account,—that these wrongs against ourselves are sins against God. Be not angry without a cause, and be not angry for every little cause. Christians must be patient, and bear much: it should be a great thing that provokes them to anger. Do not pick quarrels one against another, and make anger where there is no cause of anger; and do not quarrel for trifles, which a wise man would despise, rather than be provoked with.

iv. Be not long angry.—“*Let not the sun go down upon*

your wrath." (Eph. iv. 26.) "*Anger resteth in the bosom of fools.*" (Eccles. vii. 9.) Of the several sorts of tempers that are among men, some are soon angry, and as soon pacified. This, though it be an evil, is a more tolerable evil. Let it not justify you in your touchiness, that your anger is quickly gone: to be soon angry is your sin, though not so great, because you are soon pleased. Do not allow yourselves in this temper: little sins ought to be carefully avoided.

Others are "*slow to anger,*" and swift to pacification: hard to be provoked, easy to be pacified. This is the best of tempers; this is that "*meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price.*" (1 Peter iii. 4.) This man is a Moses, who could be angry, and was angry to a great height, when he saw Israel become idolatrous; but yet this Moses was the meekest man upon earth. This meek temper is the most desirable of all tempers, even for our own sakes. Every man who is a wise man, would, if it were possible, be a meek man: none would be a fury, but a fool!

Meekness of spirit is the way to obtain every man's love and good opinion; and the way also to our own ease and serenity of heart. Frowardness and fretfulness are their own punishment. What vexations and galls are such persons to their own hearts; and what a reproach, by-word, and odium are they to others!

Others are easily provoked, and hardly pacified. A little spark will kindle a fire, but many waters will not quench it. "*A soft answer,*" saith Solomon, "*turneth away wrath.*" (Prov. xv. 1.) In some it will: but in others, neither soft nor hard words will do it. No contending, no stooping, no yielding, no loving obliging words or carriage, will stop the current, till time hath a little allayed and worn it out. This is a wretched temper, and next to the worst;—soon angry, and long angry.

Others are soon angry, and never pacified. The grudge of their hearts is as a cancer in their breasts: there it corrodes and frets, but will not be cured. These are devils incarnate: it is the malice of the devil, that is implacable malice.

v. Restrain the sinful effects of anger: such as, First, Angry looks. We read, Prov. xxv. 23, of an angry countenance. An angry look is either a furious look,—the fire of the heart sparkling out at the eye,—or a sour, sullen, dogged, discontented look.—Second. Angry words: as reproachful words, “*Raca*,” or, “*Thou fool!*” (Matt. v. 22.) Calling names,—liar, thief, varlet, knave; or railing and bitter words, which are dipped in vinegar or gall, spoken on purpose to irritate and provoke.—Third. Distances and estrangements. Keeping aloof, refusing society with whom we are angry. I will do him no hurt, but I will never have to do with him more: there is an angry resolve. Never talk of not being angry, whilst this fruit of it, distance and estrangement, continue.—Fourth. Revenge. When the grudge lies burning within, and watching to do an ill turn, or to “be even with him,” as they usually express it. Revenge is the intending, endeavouring, or doing hurt, to such as offend, to satisfy our malice and wrath. We may right ourselves upon those that abuse and wrong us, either in our estates or names, in just and honest ways; and in such cases where God, or conscience, or the honour of religion do not call upon us to suffer wrong, and pass by, or put up with abuses. We may right ourselves in case of wrong, but never out of malice, to satisfy our wrathful hearts. Some wretched spirits there are, who, in trifling offences which are offered, could pass them by, but only refuse on account of the satisfying their malice: their wrath must be appeased. This, if it arises from the malice of the heart, is a revengeful righting of thyself. How often do some speak at such a rate as this: Not so much that I regard the things, but I scorn to be abused!

Well, these are limits to bound your anger. Be not angry with God, nor with his providence: be not sinfully angry with man; not soon angry, not angry without a cause; not over angry where you have a cause; not long, not implacably angry: lay aside an angry look, restrain an angry tongue, and beware of meditating revenge: let not there be a secret grudge remaining, which will make revenge sweet to thee.

Now, because this is a great piece of the government of

the heart, and of much difficulty, I shall direct you to some means for the bringing it about.

First. Prize, seek, and maintain your peace with God.

(*First.*) This will find you other work to do, than to mind every little offence that may come athwart you.—The wrath of God is as the roaring of a lion. Whilst you are in fear of that, and caring how to escape it, you will not mind the barking of a dog, or the hissing of a goose. What, hast thou nothing else to take up thy thoughts, than these trivial things? It is an ill sign; it is a sign thou mindest not God as thou shouldest, nor thy soul as thou shouldest, when thou art so apt to be in a pet at every little thing.

(*Second.*) Your breaking peace with men, is a breaking peace with God.—Art thou sinfully angry with thy brother, or with thy husband, or thy wife? Take heed, God is angry with thee. “*With the froward, thou wilt show thyself froward.*” (Psalm xviii. 26.) You that are given to frowardness, study that scripture, and tremble. Canst thou stand before an angry God? Wouldst thou that God should carry it as frowardly towards thee, as thou carriest it towards others? Wouldst thou see such a frowning face, wouldst thou hear such words of fury from the Lord, against thy soul? Thou must look for no other from him, if thou carriest it thus frowardly toward thy friends. Mind your peace with God more; be more solicitous about the taking up that deadly controversy, that hath been between him and thee; and prevent the raising of new quarrels with God, and then we should have fewer quarrels one with another. Is it peace betwixt God and thy soul? Is all fair and friendly betwixt him and thee? Methinks thou shouldest bear anything then from men. Is it not peace betwixt God and thee? Is that great work yet to be done? Is there such a weighty concern lying upon thee? Is thy peace with God yet to make? What a foolish wretch art thou, to disturb thyself with these little matters!

Second. Totally espouse the interest of God, and renounce the interest of this self and flesh.—It is this self that is the *make-bate*, and the rise of all our quarrels. If you would know no other interest, but the interest of God, you would never be angry, but where you should be angry; you

would only be angry with sin against God. If you have renounced your selfish and fleshly interest, you would never take its part, nor take up cudgels on its side. All our carnal anger is taking part with carnal self: anything that is spoken or done against thyself, anger must be called up, to revenge the quarrel. Be more zealous for the interest of God, and these quarrels of self would cease.

Third. Know that a pettish, angry disposition (whilst it remains unconquered) will make thee a brier and a thorn, to whatever company thou art in.—Yea, and it will make every one else seem to be a brier and a thorn unto thee. What! wouldest thou have people say,—There dwells a wasp or a hornet? there goes a brier or a thorn? Take heed how you come near him, lest you be scratched or stung! If you would not make every one else to seem a brier and a thorn, or a wasp to you, then kill this wasp in your own bosom. If people would but study more their own ease, and the calm of their own hearts, and to be freed from those troublesome boilings and burnings of their own spirits, they would prize and pursue a more meek and quiet disposition. Never expect freedom from vexations and perturbations, till you have conquered that troublesome spirit.

Fourth. Know that implacable anger marks thee out for one whom God hath excluded from pardon.—If there be any one person in the world, who hath so angered thee, that thou wilt not be pacified, that anger of thine will certainly carry thee to hell. If you will not forgive, you shall never be forgiven. (Matt. vi. 15.) That is the word:—your forgiveness of others is made the condition of God forgiving you: your peace with others is made the condition of your peace with God. Thou that art an implacable creature, how darest thou ever take the Lord's prayer into thy mouth? How darest thou to say, "*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us?*" There is this included in it,—If I do not forgive all the world, let not God forgive me. Perhaps you will say, O, but I do forgive! I thank God, I can say it with a clear conscience, I forgive all the world; and any person or

persons that I have had a particular quarrel against, I forgive them with all my heart. I shall never forget, but I do forgive.—O, what folly and mere self-delusion is all this! I will forgive, but I cannot forget; that is, I will forgive, but I cannot forgive. It is the plain English of, I cannot forget, I cannot heartily forgive. I will do them no hurt, I will chide no more with them: but you must excuse me if I carry a secret grudge in mine heart against them. Is this the forgiveness that thou canst satisfy thyself with? Wouldst thou that God should say to thee, —I forgive thy wickedness, but I will never forget it? Angry soul! art thou resolved to venture it, to go unpardoned to thy grave? Would it not be a terrible word to thee, if God should say, —I will never forget thine iniquities, nor blot them out of my book? Wouldest thou have thy name blotted out of God's book? Thy sins must be blotted out, or thy name blotted out. Wouldest thou have thy sins stand upon record against thee at the great day? Then at thy peril look to it, that thou quench this fire of implacable anger.

Fifth. Know that whilst the effects of anger remain, the passion of anger will sinfully remain.—Whilst there are the fruits still continuing, there the root is not cut up. Nay, if there be but some of the fruit remaining;—if thou forbear thy sour looks, and put off an angry countenance, yet if thy distance and strangeness continue;—if thou sayest, I will do them no hurt, but I will never have anything more to do with them;—if thou forbearst to give them provoking words to their faces, but continue to bite them on the back, take thy liberty to censure them, and to rip up old sores to others when they are absent;—deceive not thyself, thine anger is not turned away, but thy wrath is stretched out still!

Sixth. Spend more of your anger against yourselves, for your own sins, and then you will have the less to waste upon others.—That counsel of Christ is of use here:—“*Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye.*” (Matt. vii. 5.) Cast the first stone at thyself; yea, it may be thou mayest see reason to spend all the stones thou hast to throw upon thyself, and thine own sins, and

have none left to spare, to cast at thy brother. How have I carried it towards the Lord? O how have I provoked, and do provoke, the Most High! O this proud heart of mine! O this peevish heart! O this envious, hypocritical heart! Lord, what can I say for it? Lord, how can I bear such a wretched, deceitful, provoking heart? Can I endure nothing from others? Lord, how shall I bear it, that thou hast been so oft provoked and dishonoured by me? O my foolish soul, thou hast other quarrels that are fitter for thee to be engaged in! Quarrel with thyself, be angry with thyself:—thou hast sinned against God, and there let thine anger shoot all its darts. This would sew up thy lips, and put a bridle in thy mouth, as it did in that of David. *“I was dumb with silence, I held my peace.”* (Psalm xxxix. 2.) I had not a word to say, when I looked up to God. What, if Michal mock, if Shimei curse? God had a quarrel with me, and it was he who opened their mouths against me: Thou didst it, and therefore I was dumb, and had nothing to say.

Christians, remember these things, and apply them, every one of you, as far as your cases need. Do not say, with some,—Here such or such an one was struck at; this word was directed to such a man, or to such a woman. Do not put it off, but take it to thyself:—it is a word sent from God to thee, as far as thy case is concerned. Let every one of you reflect, and cast an eye upon yourselves, and consider how far you are guilty of sinful anger; and then, as the disciples did in another case, inquire, “Lord, is it I?” Lord, am not I one of them thou hast been preaching this word unto? See, every one of you, how far it may be your own case; and accordingly accept the warning, as sent from God, on purpose to you. And so use the several means prescribed, that if it be possible, you may hereby be enabled to obtain the rule and the government of your own souls; remembering what I told you but now from Solomon,—*“He that ruleth his own spirit, is better than he that taketh a city.”*—If you can but secure the rule of your own spirits, it is unspeakably better for you than if you had conquered all your adversaries: if you can but restrain your own anger, it will be more

comfortable, and tend more to the enjoying yourselves in peace and sweetness, than if you could so charm the whole world, that there should never be any to do a thing that might offend or provoke you.

And thus I have despatched what I have to say, touching the government of some of the passions of the heart,—to order and regulate them so, that we may love nothing but what we should love, &c. O what a blessed frame should we be in, were we brought to this! It is true, it is not to be expected, that we should be brought fully to this frame, in this imperfect state; but so much might be done towards it, as would make our whole way of religion much more even and easy than it is. All our difficulties and failings arise from the inward disorders and distempers of the heart. The better order and the better temper our hearts are brought into, the more easy will our work be, and the more sweetly carried on.

Now therefore, after the many words which I have spoken, after the many days that have been spent upon this subject, let me in the name of God ask you,—What is there that hath been yet done upon you? What is there that hath been added to your holy love, to your holy desires and joys, fears and griefs? Are there any little sparks added to you? Do you love God more than you did? Do you desire him more strongly? Are your fears of sin, your fears of temptation to sin, your grief and sorrow for sin, increased? Is there any abatement of your love to the world, of your worldly desires and joys? Is there any allay of your fretful angry passion? Who of you can say, I thank God, these words have not been spoken to me in vain: I thank God, I find this world taken down a little lower: I do not love it so well, nor desire it so much; so that I hope I shall never again seek it so earnestly as I have done? Are you anything more in fear of sin, or grieved for sin? Are you in hope that your anger shall henceforth not be without a cause, nor above or higher than its cause, nor ever last as it has used to do?

Friends, consider, in the name of God, consider! What, is there nothing done? Are you as cold in your love to

God, as hot in your love to the world, as much without fear and grief for sin, as if nothing of all this had been spoken? The Lord be merciful to us, what shall become of such hearing? What serves this preaching? What serves this hearing? Doth God take pleasure, or can you take comfort, in your coming together to hear, and being a little affected with the word whilst it is preaching, or speaking some words after of your approbation and liking what you have heard, when yet the word doth not work, nor leave any standing and abiding impressions upon you? It is vain to commend a sermon in words, if the fruit it brings forth commends it not. The best commendation of your food is your eating it, and maintaining your health, and your gathering strength. O friends, that is the commendation we would have of our preaching, and the only commendation that we can take comfort in, that our word reacheth its end!—that there is some sign of our ministry upon your hearts, and in your lives!—that we may say concerning you, as the Apostle concerning the Corinthians, "*Ye are our epistle, and are declared to be the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.*" (2 Cor. iii. 2, 3.) Those are the best sermon notes, that are written, not with ink and on paper, but by the Spirit of the living God, on the fleshly tables of our hearts. These are the best sermon notes, and the best commendation of our preaching! Now pray, friends, consider! I do not ask you what there is written of these sermons in your note-books, but what is written of them in your hearts? Is there anything more of the love of God, of desires after God, of fear of sin, &c., written or begotten within you?

Had I ability and opportunity of personal converse with you, I should be willing to deal with you in private, hand in hand, and to ask you these questions man by man. But to supply that defect of speaking personally and in private to every one of you, take what I speak in my public ministry, as if it were spoken to you in particular, and I were dealing with you hand to hand. Though you cannot give me your answer, ye fail not to give answer in your own heart, when I ask you whether you have gotten any more love to God, any more desires after God, any abate-

ment of thy love to the world, any more fear of sin, &c. Answer conscience in this particular. I must substitute your conscience in my room: and let conscience take thine answer. Speak, every man of you, in your conscience,—How do you find it? Is there anything done upon you by these words, or is there nothing done? What do you think of all your hearing, if there be nothing done? if there be as much love to the world, as little love to God, and fear of sin? if there be the same touchiness, the same pettishness, the same angry distemper, as if you had kept at home all this while, and never heard any of that which has been said? Are not you ashamed, are not you afraid, that these words of the Lord should have no effect upon you? Beloved, I have preached to you in hope: I have hoped for fruit; I have laboured for some change for the better upon you, in all these respects. O set your hearts unto these words! Remember what you can, and recover what you have forgotten! Look up to God, look up to God, and offer this prayer to him,—Lord, let the things that have been spoken, be written: let them be written, not with ink and pen, but by the Spirit of the living God! not in a book or on paper, but on the fleshly table of mine heart! Look up to God for help: and determine in yourselves to set your hearts to it, to follow after this blessed order and government of the heart. Study within yourselves, how to raise your affections to things above; to loosen your hearts from the world, and things below. Be not content to be thus dead in your hearts towards God, thus alive towards the world. Nor be content to wish for more of the divine love,—to wish you could abate towards this world; but in good earnest, make it your business and study so to do. Might we once bring you to this,—that while we are labouring with you in the word and doctrine, you would labour with us in the Lord,—to work your hearts to an affectionate compliance with our words: if you would be steadfast and unmoveable, and abounding in this work, then there would be hope, that neither our labour nor yours should be in vain in the Lord. Then should we look to see the death of this worldly love, and a spring of the divine love, and life, and joy, and glory;

this earth and flesh under foot, and the Spirit of glory and of God resting upon you.

Put on, therefore, in the fear of the Lord: set you close to this heart-governing work: quicken, strengthen, encourage your hearts herein with these words.

Yet further, the government of the heart stands,

iv. In suppressing all manner of evil, and exciting and maintaining the good that is in the heart.—There are in the heart, as there are in a kingdom, two parties,—the evil, and the good. The evil party are the rebellious lusts of our heart; the good party are the graces of the Holy Spirit. The government of the heart is to be as the government of a kingdom,—for suppressing the evil, and encouraging and upholding the good.

The evil party are, the lusts of the heart; such as pride, envy, malice, covetousness, &c. There is no government of these, but by keeping under and suppressing them;—they cannot be kept in order, they are "*not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,*" (Rom. viii. 7,) and must be rooted out and crucified. Those that are Christ's "*have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*" (Gal. v. 24.) Our business is not barely to moderate them, but to kill them. Moderate pride, or moderate envy, or moderate malice, or moderate covetousness, is not that which should be intended in the government of the heart: nor is there any such thing possible; the least degree of lust is immoderate. Christ determines the case about swearing, whether it be a little or a greater oath;—it is not, Swear but a little, or, but seldom; but, "*Swear not at all:*" (Matt. v. 34:)—such must be the determination here. Be not proud at all; be not envious, or malicious, or covetous at all. To allow ourselves to be moderately proud or covetous, is the same as to allow men to be moderate drunkards, or moderate adulterers: this may be as well allowed, as moderate lusts. Moderate lusts will cast into intolerable fire. Possibly thy hell may not be altogether as hot and scorching, whose lusts are more tame;—but yet it will be intolerable. It is poor comfort for any one to think,—I shall have the easiest place in hell! He that is least in the kingdom of God, shall have his load of

everlasting glory ; shall have as much joy and blessedness as his heart can hold ; shall be full of the goodness and glory of the Lord. And he that is least in the kingdom of darkness, shall have more than his load of the wrath of God : his heart shall be brimful, and running over ; the fury of the Lord shall break the back and the bones, and tear the bowels ; inexpressible torment shall be given to the least of the damned sinners. Moderate lust, if it be not mortified lust, will cast into intolerable wrath and vengeance : therefore these must not be suffered in the least degree, but are to be mortified and destroyed.

But how may I suppress these lusts ?

(i.) Never make your flesh your favourite.—If a prince receive a rebel for a friend, and take him to his bosom, not only his government, but his life, is in danger. How was it with Samson, when he took Delilah into his confidence ? She betrayed his strength from him ; she delivered him into the hand of the Philistines. If you befriend this flesh, it will betray you ; it will betray you into the hands of the devil. Little do you think what mischief you are working to yourselves, whilst you favour your flesh. In nourishing your corrupt flesh, you nourish a viper, that will sting you to the heart. Know it for your enemy, and keep it off from you as your enemy. Do not gratify, and please, and pamper your flesh ; but starve it rather, and crucify it. If we would be so wise as to count our lusts our enemies, and deal with them as our enemies,—deal more hardly and more severely with them,—we should rid ourselves of much of our danger, and of our disturbance in the ordering our hearts.

(ii.) Never make the flesh your counsellor.—“*When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me, immediately I conferred not*”—that is, consulted not—“*with flesh and blood.*” (Gal. i. 15, 16.) Let flesh and blood be none of your favourites, none of your counsellors. What government is there like to be, when the King is compassed about with wicked advisers ? “*Take away the wicked from before the King, and his throne shall be established in righteousness.*” (Prov. xxv. 5.) Then there is like to be a holy government within you, when you have none but holy counsellors.

Your flesh will be just such a counsellor to you, as Rehoboam's young men were to him: (1 Kings xii. :) their counsel cost him the loss of the kingdom.

Do not ask counsel of your flesh, nor take its counsel. If you would know what you should eat or drink, or to what measure, do not ask your appetites' counsel. That would say,—Eat to the full, spare not for cost; eat what thou hast a mind to, drink whilst thou listest. Do not ask your pride, How shall I be clothed? what garments shall I wear, what fashion shall I use? If you ask your pride, what counsel do you think it would give? Do not ask your covetousness, What alms shall I give? what good shall I do with my estate? where shall I bestow what I have? Keep it to thyself, keep it for thine own; make thee great with what thou hast gotten; build thee a house, and build thee a name in the earth, for a rich and wealthy man; get what thou canst, and then leave thy substance for thy babes, thy children after thee: that is the counsel that covetousness would give. Do not ask thy sloth, What pains are needful to be taken for God, or thy soul? Whether industry and diligence in working out thy salvation be so necessary? Sloth will counsel thee. Take thine ease; do not make the way to heaven harder or straiter than God hath made it; favour thyself, and do not expose thyself to too much hardness.

Christians, you have multitudes of lusts, that will be ready to give you counsel in every case; but take heed, take counsel of none of them. Take counsel of God, take counsel of the Scriptures, take counsel of conscience. How would God have me to use my estate? What alms would He have me give? What bounty, what liberality doth He call me to? How would God and conscience have me to feed myself, and clothe myself? Doth God say as pride says?—On with thy ornaments, follow the fashions, deck thyself with that attire that will best please thee! Doth God say as thine appetite says?—Eat whatever thine heart lusteth after; drink as much, and sit at it as long, as thou hast a mind! Doth conscience say, as this sloth saith?—Favour thyself; take thine ease; be not too painful and industrious for thy soul; be not too strict or too pre-

cise, nor expose thyself to the contempt and scorn of the world, by thy zeal in religion! Take counsel of God, Christians: take counsel of Scripture and conscience. But do not make flesh and blood your counsellors. To make your flesh your counsellor, is to take the malefactor from the bar to the bench, and there set him in judgment on his own case! Your lusts are the malefactors, that are to be consulted against, to be condemned, and crucified. To the bar with them! Let them have sentence against them; but let them not be called up to the bench to be consulted withal.

(iii.) Never look for any government or safety, till you have gotten this flesh under foot.—It will be on the throne if it can: while it lives, it will be aspiring to the government. Deal with your flesh as Herod and Pilate did with Christ, when they feared he would take away the kingdom. Let it be crucified. Or as Saul endeavoured to do by David, who he feared would be King in his room:—he did all he could to rid the country of him. He persecuted him from city to city, from hold to hold, and raised forces to slay David. Look with the same evil eye at lust, as Saul did on him. Prosecute it from hold to hold; seek the life of this flesh, which is every day undermining your souls, and taking the government out of your hands.

O friends, that you were deeply sensible what a mischievous and mortal enemy this carnal mind, this carnal heart, these fleshly lusts, are to you! Say of these, not only as Rebekah of the daughters of Heth,—I am weary of my life; but, I am in danger of my life, because of the daughters of Heth. O it were a comfort, might one hear Christians more heartily groaning under their tyranny,—Woe is me because of this proud heart! woe is me because of this froward, pettish, angry, impatient spirit! O this envy, O this earthliness, O this sluggishness! Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me! It would be comfortable to hear you groaning (I do not say complaining; complaints often come not deep; but sighing, and groaning, and mourning in secret) before Him who seeth in secret. This hearty mourning and affliction under your lusts, is a degree of striving against them; and hearty striving is a

degree of victory over them. When you are once come heartily to say,—I can never have ease, and I will never have peace, with this pride, or covetousness, or any of my lusts; and if they abide in me, they shall never abide in peace in me. If I cannot utterly conquer them, through the help of God I will never give over fighting against them; if they remain in me, I hope they shall never again reign in me. I will resist them, I will pray against them, I will watch against them. I hope I shall never again resign myself to this pride, or to this covetousness, but will withstand them;—in the name of the Lord will I withstand them. To him I resign the government of my soul, in hope that he will make my foes my footstool. Friends, such a resolved and effectual striving against lust, is a fair degree of conquest; and when your enemies are thus put under your feet, you may then with the more ease have the government of yourselves upon your shoulders. But, O beware of a flesh-favouring heart! beware of a lust-excusing heart!

The good party.—Grace must be excited and upheld. Christians must hold a hard hand and a strait hand upon lust,—upon every lust. There is no good to be done whilst these are suffered: and they must quicken, and cherish, and encourage every little spark of the grace of God. These are the good subjects in the kingdom, which must be countenanced and upheld:—“*That good thing which was committed to thee, keep by the Holy Ghost.*” (2 Tim. i. 14.) Whatever that good thing was that is there meant, it is certain that the grace of God is the great good thing that must be kept. Keep it safe, that it be not lost; keep it alive, that it grow not to decay; keep it in good liking; nourish and cherish the grace of God. Kings must be nursing fathers, queens nursing mothers, to their good subjects: so must Christians be to the good in their hearts. Keep grace in good plight, and keep it in good order; keep it in action: let your faith be working faith, let your love and your holy desires be working love, and working desires. There is no way to keep grace in a state of life, unless you keep it in action: holy actions are both the end of keeping grace in life, and the means of maintaining its life.

O Christians, keep your graces in constant exercise! be busily working for God and glory! Do not let these precious talents rust for want of use: whilst grace lies idle or asleep, then lust lords it in the soul. If you keep it not in constant action, to the crucifying of lust, lust will be busy in crucifying grace.

What government will there be, when governors side with, and take the part of, evil ones; and curb and discountenance, or take part against, them that are good? If you would govern your hearts aright, take part with the grace that is in you, and take up arms against lust. Thou hast pride in thy heart; thou hast frowardness, thou hast covetousness: but wilt thou take part with these? Wilt thou be on the side of thy lusts? Tread upon them: be glad, be thankful for every word, for every friend, that will speak against the pride and covetousness of thy heart. Be not angry when thou art checked or reprov'd; be thankful for anything that speaks against these evils. But take part with the good that is in you. When the spirit lusteth against the flesh, when grace rises and resists corruption, when the interest of Christ within thee crosseth and contradicteth the interest of the flesh, take part with Christ and his grace. We are too apt to take part with our flesh, when we do not think we do so. When the flesh enticeth us to what we would have,—this liberty, or that gain, or pleasure,—we sometimes, to do our flesh a kindness, will study arguments to prove it good and right which flesh would have. Though it be nought or pernicious, yet because it is pleasing to our flesh, we do what we can to prove it lawful and good. This is a taking part with the flesh, a siding with and strengthening this rebel.

On the other side, when grace calls us to duties that are contrary to the flesh,—to hard and self-denying duties; to more strictness, to more severity than our flesh can bear; then we often study objections against it. Christ is not so austere. But while we thus take part with the flesh, the evil that is in us, and thereby take part against the good that is in us, what government is there like to be, all the while, in those hearts, where the rebels are sided with, and the good subjects discountenanced and opposed?

v. In strengthening the sinews of government,—rewards and punishments.—What are laws? what government can there be, if there were no rewards and punishments? Who would obey, if there were no reward to obedience? who would fear to rebel, if men should suffer nothing for their rebellion? Rewards and punishments are the sanction and strength of laws. Now for the strengthening of these sinews of government, consider,

(i.) That there is an eternal world.—After we have made an end in this world, there is another, where we must have a being. Man dieth not as a beast dieth,—as a dog or a swine: as a wise man dieth not as a fool dieth, so neither do wise men or fools die as a beast dieth. There is not an end of us when we die, as there is of the beasts that perish: we pass away out of this into another world. “*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*” (Eccl. xii. 7.) Man, though he hath a mortal body, yet hath an immortal soul. The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord; and when this candle is once lighted, it shall never go out. It is carried away hence, but it is carried to God that gave it. The souls of all men, good and bad, when they die, do all go to God: even those that go to the devil, are first carried to God, by him to receive their sentence to their everlasting state. Sinners, when they die, go not to God as their reward, or blessedness, but to God as their Judge. Sinners will say, as Christ did, “*Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!*” (Luke xxiii. 46;) but God will say to them, Who are ye? “*I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*” (Matt. vii. 23.) I am none of your Father. Ye are of your father the devil: get you down to him. Commend your spirits to me! What, have you given up your souls to the devil, and all your life long have they been serving him, and he has been corrupting and depraving them,—blinding them, hardening them,—making them such filthy and unclean things,—and now do ye think to come off so, to commend these filthy and unclean souls to me? Away with them! I’ll none of them! If those that are sanctified by my Spirit, and serve me with their spirit, come to me when they die, I will take them to me; I will acknowledge

myself their Father ; they shall dwell with me. But those that have served sin and the devil while they lived, let them not think to commend their spirits to me when they die : I will none of them ! Well, but whether we must live with God, or the devil, into the other world all souls, good and bad, must pass when they go hence.

(ii.) There is an eternal judgment.—So the Apostle tells us, Heb. vi. 2 : “ *Of the doctrine of eternal judgment.*” It is called an eternal judgment ; not as if the day of judgment should last for ever. In how long or how short a time, that judgment shall be despatched, no man certainly knows : the glorious God can make short work, and will do so, in that great and dreadful day. It is called eternal judgment, because it sentences men to their everlasting state : and it is the last judgment. There shall never be another to all eternity, and the decree of this judgment shall stand for ever. “ *We must all stand before the judgment.*” (2 Cor. v. 10.) “ *Who will render to every man according to his works,—to them that by patient continuance in well-doing, do seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life ; but to them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of them that do evil.*” (Rom. ii. 6—9.)

(iii.) In the judgment to come, the secrets of the heart shall be opened and judged.—Men shall be judged for their words, men shall be judged for their deeds ; but not for these only,—but for the secrets of their hearts. “ *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.*” (Eccles. xii. 14.) The judgments of men are only over our bodies, and outward acts : they know not our hearts, and therefore cannot be the judge of our hearts. But,

i. God sees the heart.—“ *I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins.*” (Jer. xvii. 10.) “ *Thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.*” (Matt. vi. 4.)

(i.) He seeth the good that is in secret, the love and fear of his name ;—our inward desires, and thirstings, and breathings after him ;—every holy thought, every holy purpose ;—the inward mournings of the heart under sin and

temptation, the inward strivings and wrestlings of the soul against temptation and corruption;—our self-loathing and self-abasement;—the integrity and uprightness of our hearts. Whilst men are censuring, or reproaching, or punishing us as hypocrites, God sees the integrity that is in our souls. O, friends, get an honest upright heart in the sight of God! you shall never lose the benefit and blessedness of it. God sees the sincerity of the upright, and will certainly reward it.

(ii.) He seeth the evil that is in secret. The proud heart, the false and guileful heart, are open before him. Beware of playing the hypocrite; of satisfying yourselves with hypocritical duties, hypocritical praying, hypocritical hearing, or professing. God sees what that heart of thine is doing, while thy tongue is praying, or thine ear hearing. Thou mayest deceive men and thine own self, but God cannot be deceived.

ii. The secrets of the heart shall be opened and judged in that judgment of God.—“*Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God.*” (1 Cor. iv. 5.)

(i.) The things of the heart are hidden and dark things: the thoughts of the heart dark thoughts, the counsels of the Lord dark counsels; even the good things that are in the heart, are to all others but dark things.

(ii.) In the day of judgment, these things of darkness shall be all brought to light; the secrets shall be all made manifest. What a sight will there be in that day, when the hearts of all the world shall be seen as it were at one view! What a blessed sight will there be, when all the beauty and inward glory of the saints, all their graces, shall be seen! What a black sight also will there be, when all the filth and garbage that is in sinners' hearts; all the venomous brood, all the cockatrice's eggs that ever have been hatched in those unclean hearts; when all the wicked counsels and devices of their hearts; all the curses and blasphemies, all the cozenage and fraud of the heart; all the wicked plots and contrivances of the heart against God or his saints; all the adulteries and filthiness of the heart;

all the madness and follies of the heart; all the malice, and spite, and rage of the heart: when all these shall be presented at one view, O what an odious sight will there be! Sinners, do not cheat yourselves in your sinful ways, with hopes of secrecy; for all must be brought to light! If all that wickedness and hypocrisy, if those filthy lusts and unclean thoughts, that are in your hearts, should be now seen by all this congregation, how would you be ashamed, and how would you blush to look anybody in the face! But because thy naughty heart, and its naughty thoughts and desires, cannot be seen,—(thou mayest be a proud fellow, of a froward heart, of a dissembling lying heart, and nobody the wiser,)—therefore thou lettest thyself alone to be as thou art! As long as thou hast a secret covering for all thy ugly condition, it is well enough! But do not cheat thyself thus: all these hidden things of darkness must be brought to light. Thou must be turned inside outward; and all the shame of thy nakedness and thy naughtiness be made appear, and be laid open before God, angels, and men!

(iv.) There are eternal rewards and punishments, which, in this judgment of God, shall be awarded to every man.—Whatever the state of your souls shall then be found to be, they shall receive a due recompence of reward, an eternal recompence. Therefore this judgment, as I told you before, (Heb. vi. 2,) is called an eternal judgment, because it appoints to every man an eternal reward. To the repenting, and renewed, and upright heart, it appoints eternal blessedness for their reward; to the impenitent, wicked, and unrenewed heart, it appoints eternal torment for their reward. “*These,*” the wicked, “*shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.*” (Matt. xxv. 46.) O what a weight is there in the crown of glory, that shall be the reward of the righteous! The Apostle calls it an “*exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*” (2 Cor. iv. 17.) And O, what a weight is there in that curse, and in that wrath, that shall be the reward of the wicked! How will it break the back and crush the bones, and tear the bowels, and burn the souls of every wicked one! Sinners, a fire, a fire is prepared for you! What

torment is like the torment of fire, and what fire is like the fire of hell? But O that word, Eternity, eternity! that is the scalding and scorching word! Everlasting fire that shall never be quenched! How weary are the days, how long are the nights, to a sick man, who is tormented in his bed! But what will an eternal night be, that shall never know morning? "*Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*" (Isa. xxxiii. 14.) It is fire that you must have your dwelling in; it is devouring fire that will consume all your former gains and pleasures of sin. As the lean kine in Pharaoh's dream did eat up the fat ones, this fire shall eat up all your pleasant days and merry nights. Ye will devour yourselves: these bodies and souls it will devour. It will devour by burning,—a tormenting burning! O dreadful! Sinners, do not your hearts yet tremble? What, not to think of burning, devouring burning! How do ye think that ye shall look upon sin, when these bodies and these souls of yours shall be all on fire? when those eyes, and that tongue, and those hands, and every limb, shall be all glowing fire, as red hot iron in a furnace? How do ye think ye shall endure it? But yet you have not all: the worst is yet behind. It is everlasting burnings: fire that shall never be quenched. O that word, Never, never, never an end! What a burning dagger will it be, in the souls of those damned ones! Think what it hath already been to Judas, who hath been burning in this fire above sixteen hundred years! think what it hath been to Cain, that hath been burning there almost ever since the world began, above five thousand years; and yet are burning still at this day! What a long and dismal time have they had of it already! But all this is not so much as a minute, or a moment, to those everlasting ages of torment, that are still to run out, and will never be expired. Such are the rewards of the wicked,—torment, torment in extremity, and torment to eternity! But the upright heart shall be rewarded with a weight of glory and joy: and this shall be an exceeding and eternal glory.

(v.) A sense of these eternal rewards is the very strength and sinews of government.—Where I shall show,

i. What I mean by a sense of these eternal things.—
There are three things in it :—

(i.) A believing these things.—That there are such an eternal judgment and eternal reward. These things are certain. “*Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*” (Psalm lviii. 11.) And as verily as there is a reward for the righteous, so verily there is a reward for the sinner. These things are certain, and these things must be believed. “*He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” (Heb. xi. 6.) And as he must be believed a rewarder of them that seek him, so also a revenger of them that slight and disobey him. He that cometh to God, and will obtain this reward, and escape this vengeance, must believe this, or he will never come. The reason of the rebellion of the heart of men against God, is their unbelief: believe the judgment of God, and that will bring you under his government. When you come to say,—Verily it is so: this is no fable or delusion: it is certainly so, it is undoubtedly so: such a judgment there shall be, such rewards will be given, as verily as if I saw it done!—then your hearts will be governed, and never till then.

(ii.) Understanding what these rewards shall be.—
What great and wonderful rewards they are. Things to come must be known ere they will affect. Heady sinners, however they say they believe, yet they little know what it is to believe. They know not what it is to be saved; they know not what it is to be damned! “*A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this. When the wicked spring up, as the grass, and all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.*” (Psalm xcii. 6, 7.) A brutish man understandeth not this,—neither that sinners shall be destroyed; nor what a dreadful destruction, their destruction shall be! It is true these things to come cannot be perfectly known here: we know but in part, we understand but imperfectly. “*It doth not yet appear what we shall be.*” (1 John iii. 2.) Now are we sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be. So of sinners,—now are they the children of

the devil, but it doth not yet appear what they shall be. Sinners, who are brands prepared for the burning, little think what that burning is, that is prepared for them; and they shall never know it perfectly, till they come there. But yet such a knowledge of these great and astonishing things may be had while here, as may work mightily towards the governing of the heart: and a knowledge there must be of them, or they will never work. There is a foreknowledge, that is obtained by believing, and meditating upon these things. "*Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.*" (Psalm cvii. 43.) And as his lovingkindness, so his wrath and indignation. There is also an after-knowledge, or an experimental knowledge. Some sinners will never know what hell is, till they know it by experience; till they fall into the pit, and the sense of that wrath, when they come to be preyed upon, and wrapped up in the devouring flames, teach them what a dreadful wrath it is. Beware, sinners, of such an experimental acquaintance with hell; wherein your flesh and your bones, and the torments of them, shall make you know, what now you will not understand! It is a fore-knowledge, by observing and pondering what is written and preached of these great things, that is necessary to your present government.

(iii.) A feeling of these things.—I mean now, a feeling beforehand; a feeling that is realized by your foreknowledge. What we believe and understand, if they be great things, will make impressions upon our senses. By the knowledge of God, and the blessedness of heaven, the saints receive some foretaste of that glory and blessedness. "*If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*" (1 Pet. ii. 3.) And by the knowledge of the wrath and judgments of God, some sinners taste that wrath; it makes their hearts begin to burn above ground. There is a heaven begun in the hearts of saints, and a hell begun in the hearts of sinners.

This now is that which I mean by a sense of the things to come:—getting such a belief of the certainty of these things, such an understanding of the greatness of these things, that may deeply affect the heart, and leave powerful impressions on the senses, that the heart may be

powerfully moved and deeply affected with them. Sinners' hearts are as stones and senseless stocks: when we have spoken to them of the deep things of God, we may say of these eternal things, as the Apostle of his temporal sufferings, (Acts xx. 24,) none of these things move them, or will in the least work upon them. But if we could let in a little more light into their minds,—if we could show them some glimpses of the glory to come, some flashes of the eternal fire, these might make those stocks to feel!

ii. This sense of eternal things, is the sinews of government.—There can be no government without rewards and punishments; and if these rewards and punishments be not believed, known, and perceived, it is all one as to government, as if there were none at all. It is the understanding and sense of these rewards, which constitute the strength of government.

Now there is, according to the two different rewards, a different sense of them.

(*i.*) An alluring, encouraging, and obliging sense.—A sense of the magnificence, kindness, and mercy of the Lord will encourage to subjection and obedience. It will draw forth our love, and stir up all our powers to active submission. O how would the lively sense of God, and the blessedness of heaven, kindle our affection, enlarge our desires, raise our hopes, and fill us with joy! What would be loved as God is loved? What would be desired as God is desired? What would be hoped for, as heaven is hoped for? What would our love, or desires, or hopes, find too much to be done or suffered, where there is a deep sense of these great things, that shall be the reward of all?

How would such a lively sense of God and of heaven, abate our love, and cool our desires after earth and the things thereof? Who would regard dust, and stones, and trash, that had gold and pearls set before him? What would this money be, these sheep and oxen, these carnal pleasures and sports be; how easily could they be wanted, how little would they be loved or desired, were that glory, honour, immortality that is above, more before our eye and upon our hearts! You complain you cannot get your hearts loosened and disentangled from these earthly things.

O, it is because heaven is so much out of sight! you have so little sense of the good things to come; and hence it is; you fall a lusting after the good things present. Get more sense of God into your hearts, and you will feel your affections to fall and abate towards these earthly things. "*Look on the things which are not seen,*" as the Apostle did (2 Cor. iv. 18) upon the things that "*are eternal,*" and you will disdain and contemn "*the things that are seen,*" which "*are temporal.*"

(ii.) The sense of the punishments to come will be an aweing sense.—The severities of the Lord, and his dreadful wrath and vengeance, would awe the heart into subjection to him. O what an influence would this have upon the governing our fears, and our grief, and our anger! Whom should we then fear, but God? What would the wrath of man be, what would temporal sufferings be, how little would they be feared, were there a due awe of God upon our hearts? Your awe of God would say the same to you as the Prophet,—"*Cease ye from man,*" (Isa. ii. 22,) trust not in him, and fear him not; and as Christ said, "*Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer;*" (Rev. ii. 10;) and, "*Be not afraid of them that kill the body.*" (Luke xii. 4.) Fear God, who is able to cast into hell. Whom should we then fear, but God? And what should we then fear, but sin against God, which maketh us so obnoxious to his wrath? You that now make light of sin, can lie, and defraud, and be covetous, and do anything else your hearts lead you to; and make nothing of it, or treat it as a small matter. Get an awe of God on your hearts, and your sins would make you tremble! And what an influence would it have upon the suppressing your sinful anger? It would take up all our quarrels; a sense of heaven and hell would make us all friends;—those great things would swallow up the lesser. Why do I stand vexing and fretting myself at every one that crosseth me? How stands it with my soul to God-ward? How may I escape the wrath to come? Is it peace betwixt the Almighty and my soul? Friends, it is a sign that you have little sense of your eternal concerns, where every little thing so excessively moves and disturbs your spirit.

iii. How to get, and maintain upon our hearts, this sense of eternal things.

There are two things, I have told you, are supposed to belong to this sense,—a believing, and an understanding, these great things. And to the improving of what we believe, and understanding of them, there is a third thing necessary,—meditation, and frequent thinking upon them. Exercise your thoughts more upon the eternal world; spend more thoughts, think oftener upon it, and spend more deep thoughts of heart upon them. Our thinking and meditating, is the same with that looking on the things not seen, mentioned before. (2 Cor. iv. 18.) Look more heavenward, and look more towards hell, and this will affect your hearts. Particularly think these three thoughts:—

(*i.*) Think that, In this eternal world I must shortly be.—One of these two rewards must be my reward; one of these two states—eternal blessedness or eternal misery—must be my condition. That heaven which I now hear preached of, that hell which I now am warned of, I shall be in one of them, in a little while: as sure as I am alive, and here this day, so sure shall I be in heaven or hell a few days hence. What is become of those that were alive a few years since, that I knew and was acquainted with, and did eat and drink with, and buy and sell with, that now are no more seen? Where are they all? They are all passed over, and gone into the other world: they are gone, and I am following after. I must shortly be with them. The saints that are dead and gone, they are entered into their reward; they are gone to Christ; they are entered into the joy of their Lord: and if I be one of them, partaker of the same faith, walking in the same holy steps, I also shall have the same reward. The sinners that are dead and gone, they are entered into their reward; shut out from the presence and joy of the Lord, and shut up under chains of darkness, and burning in the furnace of fire: and if I follow them in their sins, and be impenitent therein, a little while hence I shall overtake them; I shall have my chain with them, my furnace with them.

Well, let this be one thought of your hearts, how nearly you are all concerned in the other world, and how certainly

you shall be there. As sure as you have a being for a time in this world, so sure shall you every one of you have an eternal being in the other; either in the everlasting pleasures above, or the everlasting pangs and plagues below.

(ii.) Think also, Which of these two states in eternity must be mine, is determining every day.—It is thy present life, thine every day's course here, that must determine the case, whither thou must, when thou goest hence. (Rom. ii. 7, 8.) Thy reward must be according to thy work; thy reaping must be according to thy sowing. (Gal. vi. 7, 8.) Think with yourselves, I am every day working for eternity, sowing for everlasting. What would you reap? What would you shall be your reward in the other world? I know what you would answer:—I would reap in mercy, I would be rewarded in joy and glory. But what must you reap? where must your reward be? Why *that* you are every day determining. Look what your ways and your works are: such your reward must be. "*Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy.*" (Hos. x. 12.) "*They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.*" (Psalm cxxvi. 6.) But if you sow in tares, sow to your flesh, sow sin and vanity, I leave it to yourselves to judge what your reaping must be.

Were such thoughts abiding upon our hearts, what manner of persons should we then be? Is this the business of my life? Is this the great debate of every day, where mine everlasting dwelling must be,—whether in the paradise of God, or in the dungeon of devils? whether in everlasting blessedness, or burning? Is this the great question to be resolved and determined,—what I shall be hereafter, by what I am every day? O no more sinning against God! O no more neglecting of Christ! O no more hardness and impenitency of heart! O no more of this worldliness, or wantonness, or drunkenness! Mine heart shakes to think, whither these are carrying me, and where they will lay me. Arise, O my soul, shake off these lusts; shake thyself out of sleep: it is high time to awaken! Stop, stop this evil course: cast off the works of darkness, lest thou be suddenly swallowed up of everlasting perdition!

(iii.) Think further, That the state and the way of mine heart is the great thing that must determine what mine eternal lot must be.—My works must determine what my reward must be, and the state of mine heart will determine what my works will be. Well now, exercise yourselves to such thoughts ; dwell in such meditations : and think not that you have done anything to purpose, till your thoughts have begotten strong impressions upon your hearts, and you are wrought to a sense of those great things ; and let your sense of them be an abiding sense.

O what even and steady lives should we then live ! The evenness of our lives will be both the beauty of our conversation, (when there is a due proportion of our days one to another, this will make our lives beautiful,) and will be the evidence of our integrity. Fits of devotion, fits of holy affections, will prove little to us of our uprightness : our deadness and dumps, when those fits are over, will weaken all our hopes and confidence, and call all into question. It is our standing holy affections, that will be our standing comfort.

O friends, how uneven and unsteady are we ! What unstable souls, what wandering stars are we ! How sadly different are we from ourselves ! Sometimes in our secret duties, or at public ordinances, our hearts seem full of God, full of heavenly affections. What movings, what meltings, what enlargements of heart do we feel !—all spirit, and love, and joy. And then shortly after, behold, all is lost ! Our sun dips into a cloud, the stars fall to the earth, our spirits sink and flag, and the flesh rises again ! O if we could but retain the serene temper we sometimes are in, what a life we should have of it ! But it doth not hold : we are given to change. The temper of our hearts often changes with our business and employment. When we are busying ourselves about the things of God, then we are spiritual and heavenly ; (and it were well if it were so always ;) when we are called forth about our earthly employments, we become as earthly as other men. Do none of you find it so ? Do you not complain that it is so ? Lord help me, it is even too true ! I even find it so with me. Sometimes our tempers change with our company.

When we are conversant with those that fear God, there is some spirit and some savour in our converse. O it were well if it were always so ! Sometimes, and too often, we are barren, and carnal, and dead, in the best society ; our conversing with Christians is too often an useless, and carnal, and unsavoury converse. But if it be better with us, when in good company, how doth it use to be, when we fall into carnal company, or vain company ? We seem to have quite lost our God, and our religion : our eternal concernments are laid by, and our care about them is intermitted : our God and our souls are thrust behind the door, or trodden under foot.

Whence is all this ? O our sense of eternal things is for the time worn off ! Brethren, God is the same God. "*I am the Lord, I change not.*" (Mal. iii. 6.) There is the same eye of God upon you, wherever you be. He that looks how you carry it in your duties, looks upon you in your business ; looks upon you in every company, wherever you are. And as God is the same God, so your everlasting concernments are still the same : heaven is as much to be desired, hell as much to be feared, your salvation is to be as carefully wrought out ; you have as important business lying upon you everywhere as you have anywhere : and this work will never prosper, if it hath not your constant care. It is true, we are not to speak the same words in all company, and our behaviour is not to be alike, in its particular circumstances, in all company : but in the general, a serious and holy behaviour ; the carrying ourselves as men that are on a journey heavenwards ; the owning and propagating serious religion ; the behaving ourselves so that others may evidently see the spirit of glory and of God resting upon us ; and may be both convinced that God is in us of a truth, and, if it be possible, be gained to God, or at least made ashamed of their own sinful and carnal ways. Such a temper should we be in, and such a carriage should we be of, in what company soever we be. We are always in the sight of God, and we should be nowhere but upon business for God, and we should carry ourselves as such. What the Apostle speaks of his ministry, should be exemplified in the practice of

Christians,—“*As of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.*” (2 Cor. ii. 17.) Wherever you are, behave yourselves in sincerity, in simplicity; whatever you speak, speak as in the sight of God: be faithful, approve yourselves to God in all that you do.

O friends, this, even this steady, this sincere course of life, this universal approving yourselves to God in all you do, will be the fruit of an abiding sense of Him upon your hearts. This will be the poise that will make you move swiftly; this will be the ballast that will make you sail steadily: and this swift and steady motion heavenward, will both make you appear to be Christians indeed, and mightily improve and advance your souls in that grace of God that bringeth salvation. O beloved, that this now might be the fruit of these many words that I have spoken to you,—that you would, every one of you, set your hearts to it, to realize and hold such a deep sense of eternal things upon your spirits, as might have influence to the carrying you on in this even and steady course! Do not every one of you need some establishment?—more settledness, more fixedness in a heavenly frame? Do not you feel yourselves so up and down, so off and on, that you can hardly fix? Would it not be more comfortable for you, if you could be more like the unchangeable God: that as he is the same Being, so you might be the same Christians, of the same spirit, of the same way; so fixed and composed in your mind, that you might not be moved from the hope, nor from the holiness, of the gospel? Would it not be comfortable to you, were it thus with you? Would it not be much to the honour of the gospel, and to the joy of your own souls? Then once again, I exhort you by the Lord Jesus, get this sight of God in your eye, keep this sense of God upon your hearts,—which will have its fruit unto this settled and even course of holiness, the end whereof will be everlasting life. This is that which I strive for, and am reaching towards in mine own soul. And I must say with the Apostle, I press these things upon you, “*not as though I had already obtained, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*” (Phil. iii. 12.) What I seek, and wait, and

hope for in mine own soul, my heart's desire is, that you also may follow after; and be partakers of the same grace, that my soul is in pursuit of, that you and I may rejoice together in the day of the Lord.

Thus much for the keeping the heart under government.

2. Keep the heart under guard.—Keep it, and all the good that is in it, in safety, that it be not lost. Christians must keep their hearts, as worldlings keep their money, and their jewels, and their writings by which they hold their estates. If they have any stronger or safer place than another, there they lay them up; and whatever else they have to look to, their special eye and their strictest watch is upon their treasure. And here I shall show you,

(1.) Why Christians must especially guard their hearts.
(2.) How Christians must guard their hearts.

(1.) Why Christians must especially guard their hearts.—They must set a guard upon their tongues; they must watch their words, and all their carriage: but above all keeping, they must keep their hearts. So the word in the text is rendered, and interpreted by some,—Keep the heart with diligence, above all keepings. Keep the heart. But why so? Because the heart is,

i. The fountain of life. ii. The spring of all vital actions. iii. The record of all our sacred transactions. iv. The cabinet of our jewels. v. The ark of our strength. vi. Our box of evidences. vii. A sacrifice for God. viii. The temple of the Lord.

i. Because the heart is the fountain of life.—This is the reason that is urged in the text, "*For out of it are the issues of life.*" The issues, namely, the streams or rivulets, of life. The heart is the fountain from whence all our living streams do flow. Christ is our life, and the seat or habitation of Christ is the heart: therefore that expression, "*Christ in you the hope of glory.*" (Col. i. 27.) The hope of the saints is a living and lively hope: the life of our hope is from Christ, and from Christ within us. (Eph. iii. 17.) Christ dwells in the heart by faith. The heart natural, is the fountain of natural life; it is the *primum vivens*; and the heart spiritual, is the fountain of spiritual life. We begin to live from within. As death begins in

the heart, so life. Death natural ends in the heart: the heart is the last that dieth; but death spiritual begins in the heart,—the heart is the first that dies. Sinners' dead works all arise from their dead hearts. The root dies first, and then the branches and fruit wither and fall off. The devil's great design is, firstly, upon the heart. When he hath slain the good that is within, he can with ease destroy whatever good is without: the fruit will fall off, when the root is dead. The heart is the first that dies, in a spiritual sense, and it is the first that lives. It is there the seed of God, his immortal seed, is first received, and takes its root; so that there is the same reason to set a guard upon our hearts, as to preserve our life. If you would keep yourselves alive, if you would not fall down among the dead, then look well to your hearts, which are the fountains of life.

ii. It is the spring of all our vital actions and operations.—This is included in the former: the heart is the fountain of life, and life is the fountain of action. A dead man cannot see, nor hear, nor speak, nor move: he must live before he can speak or move. And what can the spiritually dead do? "*The dead praise not the Lord:*" (Psalm cxv. 17:) "*the living, the living, he shall praise thee.*" (Isa. xxxviii. 19.) That is spoken of the naturally dead, and living: and must we not say the same of the spiritually dead, and the living soul? Dead souls cannot praise the Lord: they cannot pray, nor believe, nor hope, nor serve the Lord. The living, the living soul, it shall praise thee, it shall pray unto thee, and serve thee. Hypocrites are all dead at heart, and therefore all their services are but dead services. They make a show, and keep a stir, in the outward parts of religion; they can talk as Christians, and walk and move: but it is with these dead souls, as with those dead bodies which we call walking ghosts,—they look like men, and speak like men, and go up and down like men; but still they have no soul in them: it is the devil that acts in them, and speaks in them, and carrieth them up and down. None of all their actions or motions are vital actions. The devil can make them speak, and walk, and look like living men; but he cannot make them live. Such is the hypocrite's religion: he can pray, and hear, and sing,

and speak as Christians do ; but he is dead at heart, and thereupon all his duties are but dead duties.

Friends, you are as much concerned to keep your hearts, as you are to be able to do anything that will please God, or save your soul. What is the intent of your religion ? Why do ye come together to pray, and hear, and partake of the table of the Lord ? You will say, I come to perform these duties, to please the Lord ; I come in order to the saving of my soul. Do you so ? Then look to your hearts better : see that there be the root of religion within you : see that your praying be the praying of the heart ; that your hearing be not the opening your ear, but the opening of your heart to the word : see that whatever you do, that hath any show of religion in it, you do it heartily : watch your hearts when you come into the house of the Lord ; watch your hearts when you set upon any work for God, lest they give you the slip, and so make all your services to be but "*bodily exercises,*" which "*profit little.*" (1 Tim. iv. 8.) Bodily exercise,—that is, the outward part of our religion,—ear-religion, tongue-religion, knee-religion,—these bodily exercises, where there is not a heart at the bottom of them, profit nothing at all : they will do nothing to the pleasing of God, or the saving our soul.

Friends, beware of hypocrisy : take heed lest any of you be found hypocrites : that your faith you seem to have, be not the faith of hypocrites ; that your hope be not the hypocrite's hope, that your praying, and fasting, and alms, be not all the sacrifices of hypocrites ; and such sacrifices they are, if they be sacrifices without a heart. Come not before the Lord with empty vessels, which will make a sound, but have nothing in them. We that look upon you, cannot tell what there is within you : we see your faces, and hear your voices, but what is under, God knows. Look you to it, that it be not all hollow and empty within. He that seeth the heart, seeth what is within ; and will accept or reject according to what he finds of the heart in all you do.

Friends, what do you here this day ? Have you brought with you a sacrifice for God, even a living sacrifice ? The living God will regard none of you, if you bring not a living

sacrifice. He doth not require of you, as he did of old, a bullock or a ram for a sacrifice; neither a dove, nor a lamb, but a soul for a sacrifice,—a living soul, that is quickened and sanctified by the blood and Spirit of Christ. And upon this account farther are you concerned to look to, and to keep, your hearts,—as ever you would do anything in religion, that is acceptable with God, or of any avail to your own salvation. The heart is the spring of all vital action; and they are only our vital actions, our living and lively duties, that will be accepted of the living God. Would you not be rejected for hypocrites? Would you not “*compass the Lord about with lies,*” as Ephraim did? (Hos. xi. 12.) Would you not come before the Lord with lies, and comfort yourselves with lies? Then see that you bring your hearts with you before him. Is there any life begotten in your hearts? Is Christ formed in you? Is the Spirit of Christ poured forth upon you? Is there the life of God in your hearts? And is this the spring of all your acceptable services? Then, as you love your lives, as you fear to serve the living God with dead service, set a careful guard upon your hearts, that neither these be stolen away from God, nor that life which is within be stolen from you.

Brethren, I would not that any of you be found hypocrites: therefore do I labour with you, therefore do I preach to you, and warn every one of you, that you may be presented perfect and upright in the day of the Lord. I would not that you be found hypocrites in that day; nor would I that your religious actions be found hypocritical actions, in your present day. It is said of the limbs of Antichrist,—“*that they speak lies in hypocrisy.*” (1 Tim. iv. 2.) I would have Christians, not only none such as speak lies in hypocrisy, no nor to speak truth in hypocrisy, to do good in hypocrisy; and therefore it is, that I have spent so much time among you, upon this subject of looking to your hearts, that these may be right with God, in all that you do. I fear there are hypocrites among you; I fear that much of the religion of some of you, may be but hypocritical religion: but look to yourselves, and as you would be loth to have no better acceptance than

hypocrites,—as you would dread to have your portion with hypocrites,—so dread to satisfy yourselves with hypocritical duties. Serve the God of your hearts with a hearty service; serve the true God, with a heart, and with a true heart; serve the living God with living hearts: see that there be the life of God in your hearts, and let the life within you be the spring of all your performances; that all that ever you do in religion be the issues of life.

iii. It is the record of all the transactions which have been betwixt Christ and your souls.—If ye be Christ's, there have been great dealings betwixt Christ and your souls. Christ hath been dealing with you;—dealing with you by his word, dealing with you by his Spirit; instructing and enlightening your souls, convincing and awakening your hearts, persuading and alluring your hearts after him. Christ hath been dealing with you about your repenting and turning to the Lord,—about your reconciliation and making peace with God: God hath been in Christ, reconciling you to himself. (2 Cor. v. 19.) You have not had us dealing with you in the name of Christ, who are the ministers of reconciliation; (2 Cor. v. 18;) but he who is the great reconciler, Christ himself, hath been dealing with you, and hath reconciled you to God. So sure as the devil hath been dealing with sinners, he hath drawn them away from God, drawn them to sin and wickedness against God, hath been hardening them against God. You could never have been so wicked, you could never have been so hardened against God, as you are,—hardened against conversion, hardened against repentance,—if the devil had not been dealing with you. You see what hard hearts you have: we cannot humble you, we cannot persuade you to repent and turn,—our words do nothing with you: you will not be persuaded to return, but you go on your way, and remain stupid, and senseless of your sin and misery: you will not be persuaded it is so bad with you. We cannot, for our hearts, make you sensible of your wretched cases, nor put a stop to you in your sins. You may see well enough who hath been dealing with you, that you continue so sinful still, and so hardened in your sins. It is the devil that hath had to do with you thus

to him. Your hearts are the records wherein these sacred transactions have been registered. Look into thine heart: doth not it testify for thee, how thou hast bound thyself to be the Lord's for ever, and hast accepted of his bond to thee? The remembrance of this covenant transaction will be of use to you as long as you live; will be of use to comfort you in the day of your doubts and fears; to confirm you in the day of temptations; to hold you close to the Lord, according to the vows that are upon you; to quicken you and hold you on in that way of holy and lively obedience, which you have covenanted for. When you grow cold, and careless and remiss in your way of religion, then remember,—Is this the life I covenanted with God to live? When you are tempted to decline to a worldly life, or a fleshly life, then remember,—I have promised to the Lord, that I will never return to such a life again. When you are out of heart, and complain of weakness and want of strength, and so are discouraged and disheartened, and say, I shall never be able to hold to such an industrious life,—then remember the covenant of the Lord with you; who hath sealed to you, that he will help you, and never fail you, nor forsake you. When your flesh and your heart fail, he will be the strength of your heart: when you are in doubt and fear, that you are none of the Lord's, and can lay no claim to him, then remember the covenant which hath been made between him and you, and how you own it, and stand to it to this day, and that may satisfy you. Of such great use will this covenant of God be to you; and therefore your hearts, which are the records where it is kept, must be carefully looked to.

(ii.) In point of communion.—There have been great dealings between Christ and you, in a way of friendly communion. What correspondence has been held betwixt Christ and you! What friendly interviews have there been between you! Christ hath been often looking down upon you, and rejoicing in his portion; and you have been often looking up to him, and solacing yourselves in his love: Christ hath been supporting and sustaining your hearts, and you have been staying and leaning upon your beloved. What mutual intercourse has there been! Christ

hath been often sending down messages of love to you, telling you, Soul, I am thine! Has he never sent thee some tokens of his love?—sent thee thy pardon, sent thee his peace? Hath he never sent thee down some tastes of the hidden manna, and the white stone, and the new name? (Rev. ii. 17.) And such a comfortable word with it, Soul, “*be of good comfort, thy sins be forgiven thee,*” thy name is written in heaven? And do you never send up to your beloved? If you have nothing but a sigh to send, or a tear to send, yet up it must be sent to your beloved,—to tell him, I am sick of love,—or, at least, I am sick for love.

How often hath thine heart ascended in prayers, and his heart descended in gracious returns! What mutual embraces have there been of thy faith with him, and his love with thee! There hath been a Jacob’s ladder set up betwixt Christ and thee.

Christians, such experience I hope some of you have had, of comfortable communion with Christ. But what becomes of all this blessed experience? Hast thou forgotten it? Is it lost? O, how hast thou kept thine heart? Sure such mercies should be carefully recorded, and the record should be warily kept.

iv. It is the cabinet of all our jewels.—Christ and all his graces are kept in the heart.

(i.) Christ and his graces are jewels.—Christ is a precious jewel: he is the “*pearl of great price,*” (Matt. xiii. 46,) which the wise merchant traded for; and is there said to be a pearl of great price,—of so great a price, that this one pearl bought the whole world. It is intimated, (Matt. xvi. 26,) that one soul is worth more than all the world: this pearl is worth more than a world of souls. It hath bought, not only this world below, but the world above: this one pearl hath bought the whole kingdom of heaven: all the everlasting treasures, the everlasting joy and pleasures above,—that “*exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*” —all hath been bought by this pearl. Christ is reckoned, by foolish sinners, at a very low rate. Judas sold this pearl for thirty pieces of silver. Sinners, many of them, sell Christ at a lower rate than this, for their foolish and fleshly lusts! They tread this pearl in the dust, and take very

to him. Your hearts are the records wherein these sacred transactions have been registered. Look into thine heart: doth not it testify for thee, how thou hast bound thyself to be the Lord's for ever, and hast accepted of his bond to thee? The remembrance of this covenant transaction will be of use to you as long as you live; will be of use to comfort you in the day of your doubts and fears; to confirm you in the day of temptations; to hold you close to the Lord, according to the vows that are upon you; to quicken you and hold you on in that way of holy and lively obedience, which you have covenanted for. When you grow cold, and careless and remiss in your way of religion, then remember,—Is this the life I covenanted with God to live? When you are tempted to decline to a worldly life, or a fleshly life, then remember,—I have promised to the Lord, that I will never return to such a life again. When you are out of heart, and complain of weakness and want of strength, and so are discouraged and disheartened, and say, I shall never be able to hold to such an industrious life,—then remember the covenant of the Lord with you; who hath sealed to you, that he will help you, and never fail you, nor forsake you. When your flesh and your heart fail, he will be the strength of your heart: when you are in doubt and fear, that you are none of the Lord's, and can lay no claim to him, then remember the covenant which hath been made between him and you, and how you own it, and stand to it to this day, and that may satisfy you. Of such great use will this covenant of God be to you; and therefore your hearts, which are the records where it is kept, must be carefully looked to.

(ii.) In point of communion.—There have been great dealings between Christ and you, in a way of friendly communion. What correspondence has been held betwixt Christ and you! What friendly interviews have there been between you! Christ hath been often looking down upon you, and rejoicing in his portion; and you have been often looking up to him, and solacing yourselves in his love: Christ hath been supporting and sustaining your hearts, and you have been staying and leaning upon your beloved. What mutual intercourse has there been! Christ

hath been often sending down messages of love to you, telling you, Soul, I am thine! Has he never sent thee some tokens of his love?—sent thee thy pardon, sent thee his peace? Hath he never sent thee down some tastes of the hidden manna, and the white stone, and the new name? (Rev. ii. 17.) And such a comfortable word with it, Soul, “*be of good comfort, thy sins be forgiven thee,*” thy name is written in heaven? And do you never send up to your beloved? If you have nothing but a sigh to send, or a tear to send, yet up it must be sent to your beloved,—to tell him, I am sick of love,—or, at least, I am sick for love.

How often hath thine heart ascended in prayers, and his heart descended in gracious returns! What mutual embraces have there been of thy faith with him, and his love with thee! There hath been a Jacob’s ladder set up betwixt Christ and thee.

Christians, such experience I hope some of you have had, of comfortable communion with Christ. But what becomes of all this blessed experience? Hast thou forgotten it? Is it lost? O, how hast thou kept thine heart? Sure such mercies should be carefully recorded, and the record should be warily kept.

iv. It is the cabinet of all our jewels.—Christ and all his graces are kept in the heart.

(i.) Christ and his graces are jewels.—Christ is a precious jewel: he is the “*pearl of great price,*” (Matt. xiii. 46,) which the wise merchant traded for; and is there said to be a pearl of great price,—of so great a price, that this one pearl bought the whole world. It is intimated, (Matt. xvi. 26,) that one soul is worth more than all the world: this pearl is worth more than a world of souls. It hath bought, not only this world below, but the world above: this one pearl hath bought the whole kingdom of heaven: all the everlasting treasures, the everlasting joy and pleasures above,—that “*exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*” —all hath been bought by this pearl. Christ is reckoned, by foolish sinners, at a very low rate. Judas sold this pearl for thirty pieces of silver. Sinners, many of them, sell Christ at a lower rate than this, for their foolish and fleshly lusts! They tread this pearl in the dust, and take very

dung in its stead. The very dung of their filthy pleasures is that which sinners take in exchange for Christ. Whilst the Apostle counted all things but loss in comparison of Christ, sinners make very dung of Him, for the sake of their sins. But whatever sinners count him, Christ is a pearl worth more than all the world : and all the glory, and bravery, and beauty of the world, are but dunghill things in comparison of Christ.

As Christ, so all the graces of Christ are jewels. Faith is a jewel; called "*precious faith.*" (2 Peter i. 1.) Meekness and humility are jewels, of great price in the sight of God. Love is a jewel, and of so great price that it is not to be bought for money. "*If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.*" (Cant. viii. 7.) As little reckoning as sinners make of the love of God,—though this grace be offered them, and they may have it for the taking; (a heart to love the Lord, is one of the branches of the covenant, which the Lord freely offers to sinners;) yet now they so slight it, that they will not accept it; a lust is taken up instead of this love: yet, hereafter, these very sinners would give all that ever they have for the least grain of the saving love of God. As little as you regard the love of God now, (we cannot persuade you to accept it,) yet, when you come to die, there is none of you but would give all that ever you may be worth, for a little sincere love to Christ. O, now for a little faith! O, now that I could "*love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!*" I would be content to be a beggar, and not to have a mite left me in all the world: all my farms, all my oxen, all my houses and lands,—all my money, all the substance of mine house,—they shall all go, so that I might now find the saving love of God in me. No, it cannot be bought so! If a man would give his house full of gold for it, it would be contemned as a poor and low price to buy love. The like may be said of every grace: they are all jewels, and they make those who possess them jewels. "*In the day when I make up my jewels.*" (Mal. iii. 17.) Every gracious soul is a jewel in the sight of God. Sinners tread the saints under feet, make very dirt of them; but God will take them into his bosom as his precious jewels.

(ii.) These jewels, Christ and his graces, are all kept in the heart.—As the heart is the seat of grace, (faith dwells in the heart, and love dwells in the heart, and hope dwells in the heart,) so is it also the seat of Christ: Christ “*dwells in the heart by faith,*” intimated in the prayer of the Apostle. (Eph. iii. 17.) If Christ hath any dwelling in sinners, it is only in their mouths, and upon their lips; they will talk of Christ and of grace, but they have no dwelling in them, but upon their tongues: it is in the heart of the saints, that Christ and his graces dwell: “*Christ in you the hope of glory.*” (Col. i. 27.) The heart of saints is as the heavens,—all bespangled with beautiful stars. Christ is the sun in those heavens: his graces are as so many stars, that have their brightness and lustre from his light. The hearts of sinners are mere dungeons, and dark holes, in which neither sun nor star appears: if there be any glimmering light, they are but comets, or torches, or stinking snuffs, that they take for star-light. Sinners, whatever brightness or beauty there be in any of your faces, whatever gaudy or merry outsides you have, yet what inside have you? Your hearts are all dark holes, where dwells every abominable thing;—toads and serpents, owls and satyrs, and every unclean thing dwell within you. Thou that hast the fairest outside, there are toads, and serpents, and worms crawling and breeding in thine heart. You would every one of you be afraid of yourselves, you would loathe yourselves, and you would tremble at yourselves; you would (if you knew how) run away from yourselves in a fright, if you knew what were in your hearts. Sinners care not to look into their hearts, and some of them are afraid to look inwards: and well enough they may,—they would see such ugly and monstrous sights as might even scare them out of their wits. Saints have all their riches within them: they have a treasure in their hearts. “*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart.*” (Matt. xii. 35.) There may be, and often is, poverty without, but there is a treasure within. The richest of sinners have all their treasure without them,—in their houses, in their purses, in their shops, in their chests; but all the while, there is poverty and beggary in their hearts.

Thou art a very beggar, sinner, with all thy load of wealth : it is a poor beggarly soul thou hast, how richly soever thy carcase be provided for. It is in the heart of the saints, where God bestows all his riches.

Christians, look to your hearts : you carry more riches in you than the whole world is worth : you lose all that ever you are worth, if you lose your hearts. He that hath a treasure in his house, will look more carefully to the locking of his doors : especially the room where his riches lie must be most fortified with bolts and bars. You have more to lose than the Princes of the earth, and therefore have the more reason to keep those hearts wherein all your riches lie. Not only your graces, but your good works, are kept in your hearts. If ever you have done any good in all your lives, whereof you hope for a reward in the other world,—all your duties, the holiness and fruitfulness of your conversation, your works of righteousness, your works of mercy,—these are all kept in your hearts. Conscience is the keeper of them : the conscience of an honest, holy, gracious, heavenly life, is a precious treasure kept within you. “ *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience.*” (2 Cor. i. 12.) All your duties arise from your hearts ; all your holiness, and fruitfulness, and activity for God, are as so many holy streams, flowing from a holy heart ; and all these streams return into the heart ; there they must be kept against the day of accounts.

v. It is the ark of your strength.—Some men’s strength lies in their heads,—in their wisdom, and counsel, and policy ; (a wise man is a strong man ;) others in their hands,—the strength of a Prince lies in his armies, in his forts and castles, and strong towers : but a Christian’s strength is in his heart. The Lord is in his heart, and “ *Thou art the strength of mine heart.*” (Psalm lxxiii. 26.) “ *Be ye strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*” (Eph. vi. 10.) The weakest Christians have a strong God ; and hence it is they are strong and of good courage.

Christians have need of strength.

(i.) Of strength for their work.—There are great things they have to do ; they have much work and hard service : the life of a Christian is not a toying, but a toiling life.

You shall never get to heaven by play, or by idleness: you have much business lying upon you, and great business. The working out your salvation is hard work. The souls of sinners lie idle, as if they had nothing to do. What pains dost thou use to take for thy soul? What hast thou done all thy life long, towards the working out thy salvation? Sinners, you live as if God should throw in heaven upon you, and clothe you with glory and immortality, whilst your souls are fast asleep! No: you must work if you will live; you must "*labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life,*" (John vi. 27,) if ever you will have the eating of it. You must pray, and watch, and "*strive to enter in at the strait gate,*" if ever you will get in. This should be your work, and it is the work of Christians: and for this their great work, they have great strength given them; and all their strength is in their hearts.

(ii.) Christians have need of strength for their burdens.—Christians have hard work, and heavy burdens lying upon them. Besides the care that is upon them for their souls, which is a great and weighty burden, and their fear of mis-carrying in the matter of their souls, which is another burden, they have burdens of suffering, and affliction, ordinarily upon their backs. All the hatred and malice, all the scorn and reproach of this evil world, light and lie upon the backs of poor Christians: and how shall they bear their burdens if they have no strength?

(iii.) They have need of strength against their enemies.—Christians live in the midst of enemies: enemies without,—the devil and his instruments; enemies within,—their own lusts and corruptions: and they must be in continual fight with these enemies. And their enemies being so many, and so strong, they have need of strength to resist them.

Christians have need of strength, and strength they have; and all their strength is in their hearts. There their armour lies;—the shield of faith, the breast-plate of righteousness, the helmet, the hope of salvation: and there their Captain dwells; the Captain of their salvation lodges in their hearts.

Loose your hearts, and loose your strength, and what

will you do at your work? How will you bear your burdens? How will you stand against your enemies, when your strength is lost? What became of Samson, when he was deprived of that wherein his strength lay? What weakly souls are careless Christians! Every little duty is too hard for them! How quickly are they weary! —weary of praying, weary of hearing, weary of meditation, weary of a watchful life. A little work will make them weary. How little can they do, and how little can they bear! Every little cross sinks their spirits: and what resistance can they make against enemies! Every lust is apt to carry them away, every temptation overcomes them. O Christians, by how slow a pace do we keep on our way! How little sign do we make at our work! We have been Christians, some of us, of twenty years' standing, or more: how little good have we done, how little treasure have we gotten in, how little execution have we done upon our sins and lusts! What poor weakly, lifeless, half-starved souls have we to this day! Sure we have been ill keepers of our hearts! The ark of our strength hath been laid waste; strangers have gotten in and devoured our strength, whilst we have loitered and slept. Friends, do not lie down, and idly complain, I am weak, I am a poor feeble soul! I cannot do the things that I would: I cannot pray, I cannot hear, I cannot live, but at a sad, and halting, and broken rate. God help me! it is a barren, and unsavoury, and unprofitable life that I live. It is a weariness to me, that I can live to no better purpose. Fain I would be more heavenly, and more lively, and more fruitful in my life; but woe is me, I cannot, I cannot obtain! Thus you complain of your weakness, of your unprofitableness; but why do ye stand complaining? Look to your hearts better, where your strength lies. Hast thou Christ in thine heart? hast thou grace in thine heart? and yet complainest thou hast no strength? Look better to thine heart; keep Christ closer to thee; get thy faith increased; stir up and kindle that spark of love; call up all the grace thou hast, and keep it in action. Let not the rust eat up thy strength. A little more care and labour about your hearts, to get and keep them in better plight, will recover

and renew your strength, and silence those unprofitable complainings.

vi. In your hearts are preserved all your evidences for heaven.—This follows from the former. What are our evidences for heaven, but Christ, and the graces of Christ, being in us? Your sincerity in the covenant, your having your conversation in all good conscience, prove that Christ is in you; and you thereby prove that you shall hereafter be with him. Prove that you have grace,—and you thereby prove that you shall have glory. Prove that you are in covenant with God, and walk before him, in all good conscience,—and that will prove that “*your names are written in heaven.*” (Luke x. 20.) And whither must you look for all this, but into your hearts? There, as I told you, is a record kept, of your covenant and your conscientious life; and these are the rooms where you must look to find Christ and his grace.

The devil will tell sinners, that they shall all go to heaven; and, to make them believe it, will provide them evidences, such as they are; but they are false and deceitful evidences. Thou art a Christian, thou hast been baptized into the name of Christ, thou attendest on the ordinances of Christ, thou goest to hear and to pray, &c.; therefore thou needest not fear but thou shalt to heaven! Let sinners look but into their hearts, where all good evidences are kept, and there they will find nothing: there is no Christ within them,—no love to Christ, none of the holiness of Christ; their heart is a mere hell, full of darkness, ignorance, unbelief, enmity against Christ, and his holy ways. As the evidence of a Christian for heaven, so the evidence of a sinner for hell, is mostly in their hearts. Whatever your hopes are, if you would look into, if you could see what hearts you have, these would quickly tell you whither you must go. There you should find your covenant with sin and with death not disannulled. No Christ, no grace, no conscience, but an evil one, a guileful one, a guilty one; and nothing else but that which is vile and abominable.

Sinners' evidences for hell are in their hearts: and such evidences they might find, as would kill all their hopes of

heaven. But the Christians' evidence for heaven is in their hearts. The devil will be telling them, that they are none of Christ's: he will say to the saints, as God says to sinners, "*What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?*" (Psalm l. 16.) What hast thou to do with Christ? Thou art mine, thou art none of his!

Let thine heart be carefully kept, and thou mayest answer the devil,—None of his? Whose is this name that is written in my heart? Whose image are these graces of my heart? I find the faith of Christ in me, the love of Christ in me, the very life of Christ in me: Christ hath sent me many a token of his love, which I still keep by me. I remember what hath passed between Christ and me: I have given myself to Christ; I have laid hold on his covenant, and have bound myself in covenant to him, and I stand to that covenant to this day. And there is my conscience also within me, bearing me witness that my care and endeavour hath been to walk before him according to the covenant of my God: and therefore go on to lie thus unto me while thou wilt, Satan! I will not believe thee: I believe God, who hath said, "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*" (Rom. viii. 1.) And I will not belie mine own sense, and experience of myself: this is the testimony of my conscience, that I have walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. And, therefore, Christ is mine; and I trust I shall one day be with him where he is.

Friends, if you look well to your hearts, and keep the records clear, this will be your benefit: whatever fears the devil may raise, it is but looking inwards, and there you will see that which will turn all your fears into lively hopes. But if you look not to your hearts, to keep them clean, you will be at a perpetual loss: you will never long know what to make of yourselves, nor what is like to become of you. Assurance necessarily depends on watchfulness: never look for a grounded peace without it: and never trust to that confidence, or assurance you seem to have, whilst you are of a careless heart. Whatever progress you have hitherto made in religion, whatever

experience you have formerly had, of the workings of the Spirit of grace in you, a careless heedless spirit will so darken all your experience, and blot your evidence, and leave you under such uncertainty, that, for aught you know, you may be damned at last. If, therefore, you would maintain an abiding assurance, that it is well with you at present, and shall be well with you hereafter, be watchful over your hearts, that record of all your evidence. The reason why we are at such uncertainty, and so full of our doubt and fear, lies here,—in our carelessness of our hearts. Yet who will take warning? O, friends, steadfastly resolve, through the grace of God, to look better to it. Say, Since my heart can never comfort me, unless I watch it more narrowly, mine eye shall be upon mine heart night and day. I will commit myself to the keeper of Israel, and I will set myself to keep whatever good thing he hath committed unto me.

vii. It is a sacrifice for God.—“*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*” (Psalm li. 17.)

(i.) It is the heart that is a sacrifice for God; therefore, “*Give me thine heart.*” (Prov. xxiii. 26.) It is the sacrifices: all the sacrifices of God is the sacrifice of the heart. There are other sacrifices; but whatever they be, it is the heart that makes them such. Prayer is a sacrifice. “*Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.*” (Psalm cxli. 2.) Praise is a sacrifice. “*Offer unto God thanksgiving.*” (Psalm l. 14.) Alms are a sacrifice. “*With such sacrifices, God is well pleased.*” (Heb. xiii. 16.) But what maimed sacrifices are all these, if offered up without a heart? What is prayer, without a heart? What is praise? What are alms, when the heart is not offered up with them? They are heart-prayers, and heart-praises, and heart-alms, that are the sacrifices with which God is well pleased.

(ii.) What kind of heart it is, that is a sacrifice unto God.—A broken or a wounded heart. The broken heart is the only sound heart. The wounding of the heart is as the lancing of the *imposthume*,—it lets out the corruption, and

leaves it a sound heart. The hard heart is a sacrifice for the devil: with such sacrifices, with hard and unbroken hearts, the devil is well pleased. Is thy heart a hard heart? and wilt thou thus give it up to God? See to it that it be broken, or thou mayest as well carry it to the devil for a sacrifice. The devil loves a hard heart; but it is an abomination to the Lord. A hard heart is an unclean beast, which is not for sacrifice. All the filthiness and rottenness of the heart lie baked up together in a hard heart: it will never be gotten out, till the heart be broken. In the law, the sacrifices were to be without blemish. "*But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you. And whosoever offereth a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the Lord to accomplish his vow, or a freewill offering in beeves or sheep, it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the Lord, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the Lord.*" (Lev. xxii. 20—22.) It shall be perfect and without blemish. Whatsoever is blind, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer. The unbroken heart, is a heart full of blemishes, wens, and ulcers,—a scurvy and a scabbed heart. It is the wounded or broken heart, that is the perfect heart, or a heart without blemish.

Now herein you see both the necessity of looking to your hearts, and what it is that you must secure your hearts against.—From all things, that may be a blemish to the heart; from all those maladies and diseases, that will be a blemish to the heart; that so you do not sacrifice to God a corrupt thing. "*But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts.*" (Mal. i. 14.) A sacrifice without a heart, is a lame and maimed thing: a sacrifice from a polluted heart is the sacrifice of a corrupt thing.

Beloved, you come with your offerings to the Lord; but what have you to offer? O you have prayers and praises to offer up! But is there a heart in your prayers, a heart in your praises? And is it a perfect and upright heart, a

heart without blemish? A perfect heart! a heart without blemish! Who can bring such a heart? Who can say, My heart is perfect? Who can say, My heart is clean? Lord, be merciful to me, my heart is the worst thing within me,—all sores, and all blemishes, and corruption!

OBJ. My mouth must be stopped for ever, my tongue must be silent for ever, if I must never pray, nor praise God, till my heart is a clean and a perfect heart.

SOL. There is a double perfection, a double cleanness of heart.

First. Legal.—And so that only is a perfect heart, that fully answers the righteousness of the law, or first covenant: that only, in this sense, is a perfect heart, which hath nothing of evil or hypocrisy, no spot or blemish at all in it, that the strictest justice could be offended at. Thus, there is not a man in the world who can say, My heart is perfect, my heart is clean.

Second. Evangelical.—Such a perfection, which the new covenant accepts: uprightness. A sincere heart is, in a Gospel sense, a perfect heart; a heart that hath been broken by the word of Christ, and been purged by the blood of Christ; a heart that is purging and cleansing daily; that hath its great spots and blemishes of unbelief and impenitence purged away; and hath no spots, but which are begun to be purged, and are cleansing daily.

Now a heart that hath been thus initially purged and cleansed, will, unless it be carefully looked to, contract new spots: the imposthume will gather and fester again, the leprosy will fret and eat deeper and deeper into it: longer then the purging work is carried on, the corrupting work will be carrying on. If the wounds of the heart be not carefully kept open, the devil will quickly heal it up: his hardening is his healing the heart. He will be scaring the heart, so that though there be never so much wickedness in it, it shall not be felt and perceived: and when we cease to feel our sores, when the heart grows senseless of its sins, then is a time when iniquity is like to abound. And there is no way in the world to prevent this increase of our corruptions, and hardening our hearts under them, but by keeping a constant guard upon them.

The devil will be doing, sin will be working and growing upon us, if there be not a constant watch kept.

And what will ye do then for a sacrifice for God? Wherewithal will you come before the Lord, and bow yourselves before the Most High, if you have not a heart, a clean heart, a perfect and upright heart, that he will accept? As you would be loth that God should meet you in all your duties,—your praying, and hearing, and praising his name,—and say unto you, as to Israel, “*To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices? When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.*” Your meetings “*my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear.*” (Isa. i. 10—15.) Friends, would you have the Lord thus to speak to you? Is this all the entertainment and acceptance you would have? When you come together to pray, and to hear, would you have the Lord to say,—I am weary of this people; I am weary of these meetings: my soul hateth this praying, and this hearing! Doubtless this will be all the entertainment you will have, whilst you come hither and bring not your hearts for a sacrifice; yea, and broken hearts, hearts without guile, sincere and perfect in the sight of God. Such hearts you will never bring, unless you take more care and pains about them: and therefore I exhort you, as the Prophet goes on, “*Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings.*” (ver. 16:) so also, watch ye, keep you clean, prevent the return of your evils upon you. And then I should be bold to add, as ver. 18,—to call upon you, and encourage you in the name and the words of the Lord, “*Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord.*” Let your hearts be thus kept, and then come; come with your prayers, come with your praises, and I will hear and accept you.

viii. It is the temple of the Lord.—“*Ye are the temple of*

the living God." (2 Cor. vi. 16.) It is the heart especially that is his temple.

There are four things in the temple of God, which are so many reasons why our hearts should be carefully kept and guarded.

(i.) The law of God is in his temple.—The law was read in the temple, and kept in the temple. And as in that temple made with hands, so also in that living temple, made without hands, the law of God is placed and preserved. Christians have the law of God within them,—their Bibles in their hearts: in the heart of a Christian is the copy of the Bible. God hath not only preached it to their hearts, but they have laid it up in their hearts. "*I have hid thy word within mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*" (Psalm cxix. 11.) Mary kept the sayings of Christ, and laid them up in her heart. (Luke ii. 51.) God promised, "*I will write my law in their hearts;*" (Jer. xxxi. 33;) and he hath done what he promised. He that once wrote his law in tables of stone, hath also written it in the fleshly table of the hearts. Therefore, "*Thy law is within my heart.*" (Psalm xl. 8.)

The law written in the heart implies,

i. That all those holy notions of God, of Christ, of glory, honour, immortality, of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, and of the mystery of Christ, which are written in the Scriptures, are revealed in the heart.

ii. All those holy principles or divine axioms, concerning truth, righteousness, holiness, mercy, temperance, sobriety, &c.; the nature and necessity of them, to true godliness and blessedness.

iii. That "*law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus;*" (Rom. viii. 2;) the new law, the covenant of grace, by which we are freed "*from the law of sin and death;*" the tenor and the terms of the covenant, the promises and the conditions of the covenant; the great charter of the saints, which gives them a title to, and will give them an entrance into, the everlasting kingdom;—the writing that law, is writing the new covenant, in the heart.

iv. That inward living law,—the holy bent, inclination, and disposition,—begotten in the heart, by the word, and

Spirit of the Lord; that renewed conscience, inwardly obliging and holding the heart to the obedience of the truth. A Christian hath not only something without, but something within him, binding him to obedience; whereby it may be said, much more of him, than of those Gentiles, "He is a law to himself." (Rom. ii. 14.) His own heart holds him in to Christ, his own heart holds him on in obedience to the Gospel. If all our Bibles should be lost or burnt,—if all our Preachers, that urge and press our obedience, were laid aside and trodden under foot, a Christian hath that within him, that would hold him on in his Christianity. That knowledge of God, and those holy principles,—that love of Christ, and that renewed conscience within, will keep him a Christian still.

Now all this treasure,—those holy notions, and holy principles,—this law of grace, and this living law of the new covenant, being all kept in the heart, the heart (being the temple of God, wherein all these are preserved) had need be carefully kept. Would you have all the notions of God, and the knowledge of Christ dimmed, and darkened, and razed out? Would you lose all your holy principles of righteousness and honesty, of temperance and sobriety? Would you have the book of the covenant stolen away, on which all your hopes and expectations, all your title to everlasting blessedness, depend? Would you lose that holy bent, those holy inclinations, and that renewed conscience, by which you are disposed, and inwardly bound,—bound in spirit,—to the life of Christianity? Would you that all these should be lost? Would you return to be dim-sighted and dark souls? Would you exchange your holy principles for carnal principles? your renewed purged conscience for a corrupt conscience? Would you that the temple of the Lord be robbed? Would you that your heart be deprived of all these treasures? Then neglect to set a guard upon your hearts.

(ii.) The name of God is in his temple.—It is said often, "*He places his name there.*" (Jer. vii. 10, 12.) And upon these living temples—the hearts of saints—it is said, "*I will write the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God.*" (Rev. iii. 12.) And in chap. ii. 17,

in this heart there is a precious stone put, and upon this stone a new name written, which no man knows but he that hath it. A Christian hath not only the name of Christ put upon him, (he is called a Christian, after the name of his Lord,) he hath this name written upon him, written upon his heart. Surely that table should be kept clean in which is written such a precious name. What, shall the name of God be written on a dunghill? Wilt thou suffer sin and the devil to make a very dunghill of thy heart, and on that dunghill write the name of thy God? If the heart be not well guarded, the devil will not only be carrying out, but carrying in, all the precious treasures that are in your hearts: let Satan alone awhile, and he will carry them all away. Whatever thou hast now, thou shalt have nothing of God left in thee, nothing of Christ left in thee, —none of all thy graces, none of all thy comforts. Hast thou love for Christ, hast thou hope in Christ, hast thou peace or joy in God, hast thou either the image or the comforts of God in thee? Satan stands ready, and if thou look not to him, he will carry all away. Thou wilt quickly be left a very miserable soul,—poor, and blind, and naked, if thou take not heed. And as the devil will be carrying out, so he will be also carrying in, to that heart of thine. Thy gold and thy jewels he will carry away; and he will bring in dirt, and filth, and trash. As he unloads thee, he will load thee; unload thee of the treasures of light, and load thee with the treasures of darkness. He will fill those hearts with every unclean thing; he will make those temples very stables and sties; he will make that heart a very dunghill; and Christ must either have no name within thee, or that precious name written upon a dunghill. And will you suffer such an affront and abuse to be put upon your Lord? If you do not keep your hearts, so it will be.

(iii.) The worship of God is in his temple.—“*My house shall be called the house of prayer.*” (Matt. xxi. 13.) In this inward temple—the heart—is the inward and spiritual worship of God. The people of God are said to be the people who “*worship God in the Spirit.*” (Phil. iii. 3.) There are great thoughts of heart, and many scruples arising about the outward worship of God, keeping that

pure, clearing and securing it against all superstitious inventions, and corrupt mixtures of human impositions. And it were well if the houses of God in the land, were swept cleaner, and kept cleaner, than they are. But the main of our care lies not here: these are not the great things we are concerned to take care about. If outward ordinances were never so purely administered, and kept never so free from adulterating mixtures, there is a greater thing than this that lies upon us,—that the inner temple be kept pure, that the heart-worship be kept pure and entire. The heart also is to be a house of prayer: and shall we make this house of prayer a den of thieves, or an house of merchandise? O what droves of unclean beasts are let into these hearts of ours! What houses of merchandise are these houses of prayer become! These sanctuaries of the Lord are become mere shops of buyers and sellers. Whilst they should be employed in those spiritual exercises, of loving and fearing, of praying and praising God,—offering up living and spiritual sacrifices to the Lord; behold, how our money is brought into our hearts! our sheep and oxen, buying, and selling, and trading, and getting gain! these are the inhabitants, and these are the exercises, of our hearts! It is a grievous thing to consider, how much the hearts of Christians are taken up with these things. We cannot love the Lord as we should,—we cannot mind glory and immortality as we should. It is miserable praying, lamentable praising, or meditating on God, that is to be found in us. We are so disordered, distracted, and confused in these spiritual exercises; there is such a mixture of carnal thoughts, such carnal affections; worldly projects and cares are thrusting in, which corrupt, and spoil, and enervate all our spiritual duties, so that we can find nothing but blind, broken, and maimed sacrifices, to offer unto the Lord.

Friends, how do you find it, when you set yourselves to pray, or meditate on God? Is not the world frequently thrusting in? Are not your carnal friends, or your business, or pleasures, thrusting in? And do not your thoughts and affections fall a-gadding and a-wandering after these? And do you not hereby lose many prayers, and lose many

sermons, and sadly complain of yourselves, that whatever duty you perform, it is all spoiled in the doing, so that you can take no comfort in them? What help is there for it, but setting a better guard upon your hearts? Sure, friends, we had every one of us need to be more vigilant and watchful, to prevent these sad matters of our complaints. It is not complaining how bad it is, that will make amends or make up the matter: possibly your complaints of yourselves may seem to give you some ease; but consider, the same complaints that you make of yourselves, God also makes of you. The Lord God hath complaints against you for the same things. Think of that more than you do,—God complains of you. Do you say, I am weary of such a distracted, divided, worldly heart? And I am weary too, says the Lord; “*Ah I will ease me of mine adversaries;*” (Isa. i. 24;) I am weary of these halting, trifling, distracted hearts; these cold prayers, these hypocritical praises; these maimed, broken, confused services: I am weary of them, saith the Lord. If you go on thus to worship God, come hither as often as you will, God will be weary to meet you: he hath been waiting from week to week, from Sabbath to Sabbath, to see if it may be better; if he could meet with such sacrifices here, such hearts here, as might be pleasing to him. He hath waited thus so long, and still finds so little of what he likes,—so few living sacrifices: he hath waited so long, and found so little, that it is to be doubted, if we continue thus, we may come hither to meet one another, whether God will not be weary to give us a meeting. Friends, if you would not that the things that offend in your hearts should drive God away, then take more heed how you suffer these offences, or things, to come in, or to lodge any longer in you.

(iv.) God himself is in his temple.—“*Ye are the temple of the living God.*” God hath said, “*I will dwell in them, and walk in them.*” (2 Cor. vi. 16.) The hearts of the saints are the house of God, and the house of God is his habitation. The holy God will have none but an holy habitation. Will you let sin and the devil in to God’s habitation? These will darken and defile your hearts:

those hearts are but blind houses, and dirty holes, where sin and the devil dwell. And is this the best habitation you can afford to the Almighty? What place do you think God will prepare for you, if you prepare no better place for him? How long will the Lord stay with you? How certainly will he withdraw and forsake you, if you let lust in with him?

Sure, friends, if you had a due and a deep sense upon your hearts of the holiness, of the glory, of the majesty, of the jealousy of the holy God; if you did really believe, that of a very truth this holy and glorious God had a mind to come and take up those very hearts of yours for his own habitation; that he would come and dwell in you, and walk in you, and make them his chambers of presence, and the thrones of his glory: if you have such respect for God, and such affection, that you would have him pleased with his habitation, and not meet with that which is an offence and a loathing to him in you; were you sensible, did you truly believe all this, you could not but take more care to keep these hearts cleaner and more free for him.

If you had a great friend,—a lord or knight, who intended to lodge an evening in your house,—what would you do? How would you prepare your house for the entertainment of such a friend? What sweeping, and washing, and rubbing, and scouring, and adorning would there be! Every vessel would be brightened, every room would be beautified! Would you let it lie all dirty and dusty, overhung with cobwebs and spiders? Would you let it lie nasty and filthy, and everything out of its place and order? Surely you would not. And when he were come in, would you set open your doors, to let in a rabble of sordid beggars, or common rogues and drunkards, to come and drink, and roar, and spue in the very room where your friend was entertained? No; you would sweep all within, and set a porter at your doors, to keep the unclean rabble out. O what is the greatest friend in the world, to the great and holy God? Prepare him an holy habitation; open the doors, and let the King of Glory in; and then shut the door, and let no unclean

thing enter, to offend and displease him ; so that the Lord may take pleasure in you, and delight in you, and may say concerning you, "*This is my rest, here will I dwell for ever.*" (Psalm cxxxii. 14.)

(2.) How the heart is to be kept under guard.

i. What it is to be guarded against ;—that is, thieves, blots, and distempers.

(i.) Against thieves.—The great thief is the world, and all that is of the world ; and all that which is in the world, which purloins from the heart. Its profits or worldly gains, its pleasures and carnal mirth, its favour, and friendship, and fawnings. These all lie in wait for entrance into the heart, to the end they may rifle and spoil it of all that it hath. The world steals in upon the heart, and it never comes there, but to steal away its treasures ; and therefore it is to be observed, that the hearts of such Christians as are most possessed of the world, are ever the most poor and beggarly. Never look to find much of Christ or his grace, if anything at all, where the world hath gotten possession. Christ comes into the heart, on purpose to carry away the heart from the world : his word, where he comes, is, "*My son, give me thine heart ;*" (Prov. xxiii. 26 ;) "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.*" (1 John ii. 15.) The world comes into the heart on purpose to steal it away from Christ. There is never any one that embraceth this present world, but it is to his loss : whatever the world can offer, it takes away better than it brings. "*Demas hath forsaken me, having loved the present world.*" (2 Tim. iv. 10.) He embraced the world, and what got he by it ? The same day he embraced the world, he forsook Christ.

Christian, art thou fallen in with the world ? Have its gains and its pleasures found a place in thy heart ? Doth it fawn and smile upon thee, and is thine heart taken and pleased with its fawnings ? Look to thyself : what hast thou within thee ? Hast thou grace ? hast thou peace ? does thy soul flourish ? For aught I know, thou hast seen the last of thy good days, what time this world is thus embraced by thee.

O friends, set a watch against this thief, set a guard

against it;—“*Take heed and beware of covetousness.*” (Luke xii. 15.) That is the same counsel as, Guard your hearts against this world. Covetousness is the opening the door to let the world in; nay, the world has entered in already where covetousness is. Thou who hast a covetous heart, thine heart is already possessed of the world. May be thou hast yet but a little of it in thine hand, but thine heart is full of it: the whole world is in, where covetousness has found a residence.

Worldly professors, methinks you should be startled at it, if you considered what a thief you have within you. Whatever you seem to have of Christ, or the treasures of heaven, you are like to be but poor wretches in a little time. And how is it like to be with thee, whose heart hath entertained the pleasures and the merriments of the world; or the favours and fawnings of the men of the world? who lovest to be somebody with evil men, to have their respect and esteem? He that would fain be somebody with the world, is like to be nobody with Christ. Make the world to know its distance; and whatever you have to do with it, keep it at a distance from your hearts. Never look to thrive in Christianity, while you venture to be too busy with this world, or to dote on its favours or friendship.

O, it were well with us, were we but sensible what a snare this world is to us; what a bane it is to all that is good in us! Never a flower in all our garden will flourish where these thorns stand so thick about it. The little grace you have will be less daily, it will be choked up and devoured, if you keep you not more clear of this world. It were happy for us, were we deeply sensible of the danger we are in: but there is the misery of it, people will not be sensible, nor be warned to take heed of it. This thief steals away the reason and conscience; makes men such children and fools, that they will not understand what an enemy it is to them. How many sermons have been preached and published, to warn you to take heed of a worldly heart; and yet how very few are there that escape it! It is who can be richest, and who can be the greatest in the world, that the most of our hearts are

set upon. It is not who can be the holiest, or most heavenly; it is not who can improve in the faith and hope of the Gospel, in the love and fear of the Lord; who can get most of Christ and heaven into his heart, and grow rich unto God; but who can grow greatest in this present world. Is not this too common a case? Though the Lord hath been knocking off our fingers from it, pulling off our chariot-wheels, and making us to drive heavily; letting loose the spoilers upon us, to catch from some of us what we have obtained; fed the husbandmen with short harvests, filled the tradesmen with complaints of bad markets; yet all is one: how little soever men can catch of this world, they will catch after it still. And what wonder is it, while this world doth so generally carry our hearts, that Christ hath so much lost them? You that would save anything of what you have left in you, you that would get any more while you live, you that would not go down to your graves stripped and naked of all that should then comfort you,—again I say to you, Take heed of this world, —take heed of this worldliness.

(ii.) Against blots; that is, against wilful and allowed sins.—Every wilful sin will be a blot upon your hearts. Our sins are blots and blemishes upon our lives; but every blot upon the life, is a blot upon the heart. Blots will darken, obscure, and defile the soul.

i. Blots will darken and obscure the soul.—I told you that in the heart are kept all our evidence for heaven. Our sins that we give way to, will be blots upon this evidence; will so obscure and blur it, that it will not be legible. Our sins will do directly contrary to what the blood of Christ will do: the blood of Christ will "*blot out the hand-writing that was against us.*" (Col. ii. 14.) Our sins will blot out whatever hand-writing there is for us. Thou that art a Christian, there is a hand-writing upon thy heart; there is the covenant of God, which is thy charter for glory, written upon thy heart. There is the token of the covenant, and thine interest in it, the circumcision of the heart: there are the articles of the covenant, which have been consented to between the Lord and thee, recorded in thine heart. Whilst thou keepest

thine heart clean, there thou mayest read thy title to glory ; thou wilt find that within thee, which will comfort thee concerning thine everlasting state. There are the very prints and marks of the Lord Jesus, his image formed upon thy soul, which marks thee out for an heir of life : but what wilt thou do for comfort, when these writings and this holy image are blotted ? When thy circumcision is become uncircumcision, will blotted evidence satisfy thee ? Will a defaced image prove thy title to Christ good ? Set a guard against sin ; allow not yourselves in iniquity ; fear what sad work it will make upon your inner man. Hath the blood of Christ blotted out the hand-writing that was against you ? Hath the Spirit of Christ engraven a new hand-writing for you ? O, watch against iniquity, which will restore the old hand-writing, and blot out the new ! Have you any comfortable title to glory ? any comfortable evidences for heaven ? O, sin them not away ! Whatever comfortable evidence you have, never look that they should speak comfortably to you longer, than you keep watch against sin ; and never trust to that comfort, which will hold up the head, whilst thou allowest thyself in sin. "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*" (Psalm lxxvi. 18.) What comfort canst thou have, when thou art become such an one as God will not hear when thou prayest ? Thou art a professor of religion, and thou hast comfort in Christ, and confidence thou shalt be saved through him. And yet for all this, thou canst lie for thy advantage, or to cover a fault ; thou canst drink, if not to downright drunkenness, yet to intemperate excess ; and make thyself a fool, if not a downright beast ; or at least be a companion of drunkards in their drunkenness. Thou canst defraud or do wrong, put off false wares, use deceitful balances ; thou canst defame or backbite ; thou canst be peevish, and give rope to thy fretful passions, and let thine anger rest upon thee ; thou canst profane the Sabbath, by working, or travelling, or loitering ; thou canst live in an ordinary neglect of thy family, and their souls, without instructing them, or praying with them, and the like ; and thou canst let thyself alone in these evils, or

some of them, or some other such like. But how dost thou hold up thine head under these things? When thou lookest into thine heart, how dost thou find it there? Dost thou not discover thy sins to be blots within thee? Dost thou not find the writing disfigured, thine evidence blurred, the image of Christ defaced, thy comforts vanished? If thou dost not, if thou canst be of good comfort still, if thou art of good cheer, and confident still; this comfort, this confidence, is not the comfort of God, but false and deceitful. Thou mayest comfort thyself, and speak peace to thyself still; but mistake not thyself, God speaks not a word of comfort to thee in such a case. If thou hadst any real comfort before, that thou wilt find all blotted, and the true sense of it utterly lost. If thou hast peace in thine heart, it is none of the peace of God that is broken by thy returning to have peace with sin. "*God will speak peace, but let them not turn again to folly.*" (Psalm lxxxv. 8.)

ii. Blots will defile.—They are stains upon all our glory. The coming in of sin upon the heart, is as the breaking in of the heathen upon God's inheritance. "*O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thine holy temple have they defiled.*" (Psalm lxxix. 1.) The heart of a Christian is, as is said, the temple of the Lord: the temple of the Lord is holy. "*Holiness becometh thine house.*" (Psalm xciii. 5.) It is only a clean heart that is a fit habitation for God. God hath been at great cost, to make the hearts of his people clean, that they may be a fit habitation for him. He hath washed them with blood,—with the blood of his Son: hath washed out those original blots and stains that were upon them. "*The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth—*" (1 John i. 7.) He hath washed them with water,—the sanctifying work of his Spirit. God hath made him a clean habitation, and he looks that we should keep it clean. "*If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.*" (1 Cor. iii. 17.) God will depart from, He will pull down, that house, and make a dunghill of it, which sin is suffered to defile. We had need take heed of such blots and stains upon our hearts, lest they drive out the Holy One of Israel from us. Whilst we keep ourselves pure, the Lord God will delight to take

his abode with us. Who is it, Christian, you would have to dwell in you? O, let me be a habitation for the Lord! let the holy Jesus, let the Holy Spirit, dwell in me! None but God, none but Christ: thou, Lord, art mine inhabitant, let me be thy habitation. Where God dwells, there light dwells, there peace dwells, there hope and joy dwell. I count upon nothing; I have no joy, no hope, no peace: all that I have is lost,—all that I have to comfort me, all that I have to stay or support me, all that I have to delight and refresh me,—all is lost; yea, I have lost myself, when God is departed from me. Do you indeed look upon it as so miserable a case, when the Lord hath forsaken you? Then take heed how you defile his habitation. Let wilful sin in, and that will certainly drive the Lord out: and if you would keep sin out of the heart, keep it out of your lives. Life-sins are heart-blots. “*Thine iniquity is marked before me.*” (Jer. ii. 22.) And it is the heart that bears its black marks upon it.

O friends, what sad marks have we upon us! What speckled and spotted souls have we! How miserably are our insides defiled,—minds defiled, affections defiled, consciences defiled! It is a sign what lives we have lived,—it is a sign how well we keep our garments, how well we keep ourselves from practical iniquity: our heart-stains, our heart-defilements, show sufficiently how much iniquity hath abounded in us.

Friends, look inward: see what work sin hath made within you, what a conscience hath it left you, what affections hath it left you! how hath it dimmed and defaced the image of God in you! Do you complain that God is withdrawn from you? that you have lost his quickening presence, his comforting presence? that you have lost your acquaintance, lost your communion with God? that your only friend and portion and hope is become a stranger to you? Learn to keep you cleaner, if you would have it better! Count upon it, there is no hope that God should take pleasure in you, or give you any pleasure in him,—that God should be a comfort to you, longer than you keep yourselves more pure. O get your hearts washed anew: we have need of many washing-days, who have so many

sinning-days. Every day should be a washing-day to us. Take that counsel of the Prophet, "*Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings.*" (Isa. i. 16.) Make you clean, and keep you clean. Wash ye, and watch ye: put away the evil of your doings, if you would that your hearts should long be kept clean. Wash your hands, and wash your face, and wash your feet; or these will defile your hearts. Put away the garment spotted with the flesh; keep your outward man clean; keep you unspotted from the world; that so you may be blameless and unreprouvable in the sight of God. O Christians, let us study, every one of us, to get to such a blameless and unrebukable conversation, that not only the world may have nothing to spot us with, but that our consciences may have nothing to spot us with, that our hearts may not have wherewith to reprove us, and that we may have as little as may be, of the common and unavoidable infirmities of our flesh. But however we may be overtaken as to these, we may be unreprouvable as to any tolerated or allowed iniquities: these are the great blots wherewith the heart is defiled.

Brethren beloved, whoever among you that fear the Lord, I would fain do what I can to prepare you a holy habitation for the Holy One: that whereas he hath said, "*I will dwell in them, and walk in them,*" (2 Cor. vi. 16,) you may be such in whom his soul may delight to dwell, that he may say of you all, "*This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.*" (Psalm cxxxii. 14.) It is a strange expression. The holy God speaks this to all his holy ones,—to thee in particular; to thine heart, if it be but a clean heart. The Almighty God says to thee, *There is my rest: in that heart of thine will I dwell; for I have desired it.* The Lord God hath a desire to be thy guest; hath a desire toward that poor soul of thine, to take it up for his own dwelling. I would that you may be presented at last unspotted and unreprouvable in his sight: and to this end, that you may be presented holy at last, I would that you may be preserved holy and without blame at present. O look to those hearts! Keep yourselves pure! Let there be written upon you, Holiness to the Lord. They ought to be a little heaven into which

nothing that defileth could enter. O, purge yourselves of whatever may offend, and then guard yourselves against it. This is my warning to you, and this is my prayer for you, that "*the very God of peace may sanctify you wholly,*" and I pray God that your whole "*spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (1 Thess. v. 23.) And to him I commend you, who is "*able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy. Amen.*" (Jude 24.)

(iii.) Against distempers.—A good temper of heart will be an advantage to us, in anything we have to do. A heart out of temper, is like a bone out of joint, or a tempestuous sea,—there is no good sailing in it. We cannot keep our way, but shall be driven about this way and that way, with every wind and wave. A heart out of temper, it like a door off the hinges, or a chariot off the wheels,—it drags and goes untowardly and heavily on.

O, how often are our souls unhinged, our chariots off the wheels, or our wheels without oil! And then what pitiful work do we make, at anything we have to do! When we have been in a crowd of worldly business, or been foolishly merry and vain, what a discomposure do we find upon our souls, and how unfit are we then for duty! When we come to pray or hear, what labour doth it cost us, to reconcile our hearts to our duties, or to raise us into a praying or hearing frame! We come to pray, as a musician to play, when his instrument is out of tune: he must spend a great deal of time in tuning, before one note can be struck. How much work have we, to tune our hearts at such times! and at last it may be more than we can do: so that we must either let the duty alone, or make such sad melody in the ears of the Lord, as a musician would do in ours, who played on his instrument when every string was out of tune.

Get your hearts in temper, and keep them so. Be able to say, with the Psalmist, "*My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.*" (Psalm lvii. 7.) The good temper of the heart-notes, freedom and towardliness and disposedness for anything God calls to; and firmness and stability

in that towardliness. Let your hearts be established in good. Let there be an abiding holy temper upon your spirits. Some of the distempers that we should guard our hearts against, are,

i. Lightness and vanity of spirit.—A well-tempered heart is a serious heart. Seriousness of heart is as ballast to a ship,—we shall go steadily whilst our hearts are serious. "*Gird up the loins of your minds, be sober.*" (1 Peter i. 13.) Soberness here, is the same with seriousness. Christians are always engaged about serious and weighty things: their eternity is concerned in every day they live, and in every thing they do. Every action of our lives is a stroke at that work which must have an influence upon our eternal state. We have weighty work lying upon our hands every day and hour: and how unsuitable is a light and trifling spirit, to such important affairs! A light heart is an empty and shallow heart; and a shallow heart is unfit to meddle with the deep things of God.

Watch against lightness of spirit. Frothiness and vanity becomes not a Christian at any time. We may say of the frolicks, and light and jovial lives of the carnal world, as Solomon says of laughter, "*I said of laughter, It is mad.*" (Eccles. ii. 2.) A Christian is beside himself, when he indulgeth in a vain and frothy spirit. Friends, it is not for us to live in jest: eternal life and death are no jesting matters. Learn to live in good earnest. Those that are light and vain, that are little else but froth and vapour, in their ordinary course, do use to be but little better in their most serious duties. O what light praying is there amongst us! what shallow and empty duties do our light and trifling hearts satisfy themselves withal! It may be, some of us, when we have spent a whole Sabbath with the Lord, if we reflect upon the temper we have been in, may sometimes find that we have hardly had a serious hour in the whole day. If they shall be asked, as Christ asked his disciples, "*What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*" (Matt. xxvi. 40.) What, could ye not be serious with me one hour?—what could we answer? What returns do you think, slight and trifling duties are like to have?

Look to it, God will give you but a light answer, if you be but light in seeking. Be sober, be serious: and if you would be serious in your most solemn duties, get this holy seriousness to be your temper. Beware of a vain and frothy habit: habituate yourselves to godly seriousness. Not but that there must be at times some little relaxation: the bow would grow weak, if it should stand always bent; but then,

(i.) Relaxation, or remitting the intention of our spirits, must be but short, and no more than necessary. (ii.) Never such as to be a hinderance to seriousness afterward. Though I must sometimes unbend, yet I would never unhinge my soul; or disjoint, or discompose it for its return to its proper work. We must not be of those whose lives be in jest, and only now and then a fit of seriousness: it should be thy life, thine ordinary course, thine ordinary frame, and only some little intervals for recreation.

To secure yourselves against the distemper of a light and vain spirit, get a deep and standing sense on your heart, of the weight and importance of those great concerns that are daily upon you: look more into eternity. Remember, you have an immortal God, whose eye is always upon you; you have an immortal soul, that must live or die for ever. Your business in this world, is not to please your humour, and gratify your flesh and your fancy; but to serve the living God, to secure Him to yourselves, to seek your peace and reconciliation with Him: and to that end, to make Christ, the reconciler, sure to you; to serve the Lord Christ, and hereby to secure the salvation of your soul.

Remember that you have this great work lying upon you. And this is not the work of some short moments of your time,—of an hour in a day, or one day in a week; but that this must be your every day's work, and your all day's work. Think often, What if I should miscarry in this great work!—if I should loiter, or laugh, or trifle away so much of my time, that when I shall come to die, and be away for the other world, I should find that work I lived for here, were not done, or but half done, or but slightly done! If I should then find, that I had been light and

vain in my conversation, and but slight and shallow in my religion! And whilst I was allowing my flesh what it would have, I cut my soul short of what it should have had! Death will make every one of you serious; the grave, when you are stepping into it, will make you all in good earnest. And how would your living in jest, or in pleasant idleness, then look upon you? Remember these things daily; let deep thoughts of them come constantly upon you: and this would put you out of your light and merry tune; the sense of these serious things would hold you in a serious temper.

ii. Looseness.—There is a double looseness.

(i.) Such as is opposite to fixedness.—Which is the same with lightness and vanity of heart; a whiffling in and out, unstable soul, a slippery heart, that we never know where to have it.

(ii.) Such as is opposite to strictness.—That is, the same with licentiousness; and this is it which I am now to speak to. A licentious heart is a distempered heart. The contrary to this distemper, is the compliance or closing of the heart with the rule, and keeping to it. The new heart is made after the pattern of Christ its new Lord: there exists the same spirit in a Christian, which was in Christ: "*as he is, so are we in this world.*" (1 John iv. 17.) His very spirit and image is formed upon our hearts. It is conformed to the new law or rule, which Christ hath prescribed to it; and it stands determined for strictness or exactness of walking, according to this rule, whereof the Apostle speaketh, "*As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.*" (Gal. vi. 16.) That is a strict heart, which is determined and disposed to live by rule. Licentiousness of heart, is the heart's allowing and indulging its liberty and latitude in its course. Christianity in general, is that which it takes up; but it will not be held within the limits of it. The strait gate, and the narrow way, is too strait and too narrow for it. That way it pretends to have chosen; but it will be breaking over the hedge, as the inclinations and interests of the flesh lead it. In some things a Christian,—in other things a libertine.

O how much of this licentiousness of heart is to be

found amongst Christians! How few exact and strict Christians are there, whose hearts determine for exactness and strictness of life,—who impose and charge upon themselves the whole rule, and the diligent observing of every point and tittle of it! Such exactness in point of practice, we cannot in this imperfect state reach unto: “*in many things we offend all.*” (James iii. 2.) Our feet slip, and our steps are turning aside every day; but it is the indulging ourselves in the liberty thus to turn aside, or in the heart not charging strictness upon itself,—this is licentiousness of heart.

There is a gradual licentiousness of heart, and there is a total and complete licentiousness. A total licentiousness is of those who utterly reject the yoke of Christ, and will not come under his government, but resign up themselves to lust and carnal inclinations, which command in chief over them. As those “*among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*” (Ephes. ii. 3.) Such licentious ones are no Christians: if they have the name, the heart of a Christian is not found in them. Gradual licentiousness is when the heart, though it hath put itself under the yoke of Christ, and resigned up itself to be governed by Him, in opposition to the lusts of the flesh and the world, yet often falls a lusting after that liberty, from the exactness and severity of Christianity, which in the general it hath professed to consent and yield itself unto. And though the decree of the soul, for following Christ in everything, be not made void and utterly broken, yet it is so remiss and weak, that it will not hold it closely in: but there is a frequent breaking loose from the rule,—and the heart too often indulgeth itself in that liberty. How far a Christian may break loose from the rule,—and how far he may indulge and allow himself at times, and yet be a Christian, is not easy to determine. But this is certain, that every degree of this laxity of heart is a pernicious distemper, that must be watched against; especially if it rise so high, as to conduce a dislike of strictness, and such a groaning under the severities of religion, as

maketh it seem a bondage to be tied up so short. The more of this, the higher the disease is, and the more to be doubted whether such professors of Christianity be sound. The strictest Christian is the most healthful, and the most evidently a Christian indeed : and the greater latitude the heart indulges itself in, the more sickly the soul is,—if it be not quite dead, and no Christian at all.

Friends, you that are Christians indeed, know what you have done,—you have vowed the greatest strictness possible : to press on towards it, and to reach out after it. You did not covenant to follow Christ to a certain degree, and no higher ; to advance in religion so far, and no more : you did not covenant for thus much obedience, thus much duty, thus much diligence, thus much zeal, and no more : if ye be Christians indeed, you have covenanted to follow the Lord fully ; to watch every duty, to watch against every sin ; to press on to the highest pitch of holiness, and to the utmost to please the Lord. If there were any reserve in your vow to Christ, any little liberty in the flesh, any limit of your zeal and care ; if there were any such reserve, you are false in your covenant, and false Christians.

O friends, have you vowed the greatest strictness ? Then watch against the least degree of levity. Seek a settled judgment of the excellency and necessity of strictness ; obtain a hearty love to and good liking of it ; let your souls be bent upon it ; let it be your desire, and your aim, and your hope, and your labour, to hold close by Christ. And if you would not have licentious practices abound in your life, let no licentious principles, no licentious affections, nestle in your hearts. See that there be no lust after any other liberty than Christ hath allowed you. See to it, that you are heartily well pleased with all the laws of Christ, with his narrowest ways. Let that latitude of religion, which is the measure of carnal disciples, be your fear, and not your desire. And if you feel any wish for it, look upon it as a disease and distemper of your heart. Count thyself but a weak and sickly Christian, whilst it is thus with thee.

Know that it is your greatest excellency : if holiness be an excellency, then the more strictly holy, the more excel-

lent. Yea, and you will find it your greatest liberty : the more holiness, the more enlargement of your heart to all the holy ways of God. “ *So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. And I will walk at liberty : for I seek thy precepts.*” (Psalm cxix. 44, 45.) His meaning was not, I will walk licentiously, at liberty from thy laws, at liberty from rule ; but, I will walk freely in thy ways, when thou shalt knock off the fetters that hinder me. The more we can hold in, and inure ourselves to be punctual in our religion, the more freedom shall we find, and with more ease and delight shall we run the way of God’s commandments.

And know this, that the more loose you are from the ways of God, so much the more loose you are from God : and what will you have to comfort you, what will you have to sweeten religion, when God is at a distance from you ? Keep fast to him, and you shall live the more under his reviving and refreshing influences. Religion has its troubles and its harshness ; and you will have little else if you keep not close to the Lord. The waters of the sanctuary will taste but brackish if the sun shine not upon them : a little sunshine from above, a smile from the face of God, form the sweetness and the blessedness of piety. Keep close to God, and you shall keep the passage clear between heaven and your hearts ; otherwise religion will be like Ephraim’s idolatry :—“ *For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind : it hath no stalk : the bud shall yield no meal : if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.*” (Hosea viii. 7.) There will be the labour of it, and the trouble of it, but no meal for your souls to feed upon, if you meet not God in your duties. “ *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.*” (James iv. 8.) Keep close to God, and he will keep close to you. May be, some of you have never yet tasted how gracious the Lord is ; nor will you ever be like to do, if you set not closer in his ways. Loose religion will keep you still in the dark, and in a weary and uncomfortable state. There is no other way to make Christ’s ways pleasant, than by keeping constantly in them ; no such way to make Christ’s yoke easy, as by holding it close to your necks : it never so galls and

wrings, as when it hangs loosely on : resolve upon strictness, and you shall taste the sweetness. Hold you in from running after the pleasures of the flesh ; and the face of God will be a pleasure to you, which the distemper of a loose and carnal heart will certainly deprive you of, and hinder you from relishing, or finding delight therein.

iii. Listlessness.—A dull, untoward, sluggish, inactive, lifeless temper ; where the edge of our spirits is blunted, insomuch that whatever opportunities we enjoy, or whatever calls we have to be employed for God, or our souls, we have no list to them : but through the waywardness and untowardness of the heart, we let them slip, and either do nothing, or nothing to purpose. Opportunities are a price put into our hands ; but by reason of this sluggish, listless, untoward temper, we have no heart to them, and become like the fool. “ *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it ?* ” (Prov. xvii. 16.) This is a wretched and pernicious distemper.

(*i.*) It proceeds from an evil cause.—From the carnality of our hearts, and our unsuitableness to the work of God. It is an ungrateful and displeasing task to us. Our hearts are so contrary to it, we had rather be anywhere than with God ; we had rather be about any work, than the work of our souls. We can be brisk and sprightly about our carnal and earthly employments ; but for anything of religion, there we drag and go heavily on. We are all soul and life, in what we have to do for our flesh ; but our hearts hang backward, and come but heavily and untowardly to do anything for God. This is from the little interest that God hath in our souls, and the little affection we bear to him. We are yet carnal, and that is the reason we have so little edge, or so little list to spiritual things.

(*ii.*) It is an ill sign.—What ill sign is it ? It is a sign of want of grace : either that we have no grace at all, or at least are but very low in the grace of God ;—that our day is yet but a day of small things. Where is our faith in Christ, when we are so backward in the work of faith ?

As Christ said, "*Wherefore didst thou doubt?*" (Matt. xiv. 31.) So, wherefore dost thou drag so, O thou of little faith? Where is our love to Christ, when our work for Christ goes so slowly on? "*The love of Christ constraineth us.*" (2 Cor. v. 14.) The love of Christ will quicken us, the love of Christ will put life into us: we should find our tongues, and find our hands, and find time to be more abundant in service, could we feel more of the love of Christ in us. Thou makest nothing of it, whilst thou art such a dull, untoward, inactive soul: but is it nothing to want faith? Is it nothing to want love to Christ? Is it nothing to be without grace in thy heart? or, if thou hast any, to have so very little, as thou canst not tell whether there be any or no? It is an ill sign, that thy soul is in a very doubtful case:—at least it is to be doubted, whether thou hast any grace in thee, where in ordinary thou art so untoward and listless to the matters of God, and the business of religion.

(iii.) It is of ill consequence.—It is a sign our case is bad, and it is a hinderance to our growing better. It is the vivacious, active, stirring soul, that is like to be the thriving soul. Sluggards and sleepers are never like to come to anything. We may preach to you while our hearts ache; we may instruct you, and tell you what is your duty, while we will, and you may hear us while you will; but in vain shall we preach, and in vain will you hear, till we can fire you out of this deadness, and whet and set an edge upon those blunted souls. What will it be, to be told of your duty, whilst you have so little heart to it? What becomes of all the sermons you hear, of all the teaching you have,—what you should do, and how you should live? What becomes of all the convincing, awakening, quickening words, that are in your ears from day to day? What doth all our preaching, and all your hearing, bring forth upon you? Truly, friends, the little success that is to be perceived, of our preaching among you, either to the converting of sinners, or improving of professors; the small success that does appear, (what there is within, God knows,) does even make us out of heart! But as little success as we have, we are never like to have it much

better, unless we may stir your hearts, and awaken you to more diligence and activity. When we have done all we can, we are, I doubt, likely at last to leave the most of you, either quite dead in sin, or but very dwarfs in religion. Sinners, is it nothing to you, that the enlivening word should leave you still among the dead? Christians, is it nothing to you, that the nourishing and quickening word should leave you but babes and infants? Is it not a trouble to you, and a discomfort to you, that you get no more, that you grow no faster; much more that any of you should consume and languish, under the hands of your physicians? I must tell you, it is a discomfort to *us*; but ought it not to be more a discomfort to you? Can you continue at this pass, and not be troubled at it? O, what a comfort is it to be a thriving, lively Christian! Methinks, when you see any such before your eyes, you should at least sigh out such a wish, O that it were so with me! and breathe out such a groan, Woe is me that it is not so! Methinks it should be a heaviness of heart to you, to feel your own soul in clogs, when you see others upon the wing. O that I could make you sensible of your diseases! that I could preach you heart-sick, that I could but make your hearts ache, under your distempers; that you might no longer be able to go up and down, without trouble in this unthriving case! Sure, friends, you whose case this is, had need to be troubled; and it would be well for you, if your souls were in pain, and refused to be comforted till you were cured.

To make you yet more sensible of the perniciousness of this untoward, dull, and listless temper, look a little more upon the excellency of the contrary,—a cheerful, lively temper. It is called, a "*forward*" mind; (2 Cor. viii. 17;) "*a ready mind*," (1 Peter v. 2,) that need not be spurred and whipped, but goes cheerfully and freely on its way. What is a sprightly horse, to a dull and heavy jade? What is a blunted, rusty knife, to that which is bright and keen? What is a consumptive, languishing body, to one that is lively and healthful? What is a dark and lowering, to a sunshiny day? What is winter to summer? Yea, what are the living to the dead? What a pitiful thing is

that dead and spiritless heart of thine, when thou lookest on them in whom is the life of God!

Hear, O ye sleepy and listless souls! Awaken! stir up yourselves! shake off this sloth and sleep! work out this untoward spirit! What do you mean, to hang thus betwixt alive and dead? Will you hold you at this pass, till you come to your graves? Is this all the care and the pains you ever intend to bestow on God, and your souls? Must the Lord ever find you unready and untoward, to what he calls you? Shall the world find a forward mind in you? Shall your flesh find such a ready mind, to whatever it hath for you to do, and will you only be unready and inactive for God? Wherefore have you reason and understanding? Wherefore have you the Scriptures before you? What are Sabbaths, and ordinances, and ministers for? Must we come hither only to sing you asleep, or to rock you in your cradles? Where is that grace that is in you? Where is your faith? where is your love to Christ? where is your hope? If you have any grace, where is it? What, must all these precious talents be eaten up with rust, or "*laid up in a napkin?*" Remember the slothful servant's doom. (Matt. xxv. 30.) What are your immortal souls? what is the holy God? what is Jesus Christ? what are the glorious treasures of eternity? Are all these worth no more of your care and industry? Will none of these things move you? Will not these great things quicken you? Hear them all calling upon you! God calls upon you, O my children, if you have any respect for me, come along, come faster after me! Christ calls, O my disciples, if you have any love to me, if all that I have done for you, if all that I will do for you, will move you, arise and mend your pace! Heaven calls upon you, If ever you mean to come here, gird up your loins, and come on! Yea, hell calls, Look ye down hither, what a place is here prepared for sleepers and loiterers! Your poor souls call, Have ye any pity for me? Must I perish and die for the pleasing this lazy flesh? Your poor families call, your poor children call, your poor neighbours call, (which all need the utmost you can do for them,)—Where are your bowels to us-ward? For our sakes awaken! for our sakes arise and

be doing! We die if you will not give us a better example: we die if you sleep on, who should awaken and save us! The whole interest of God in the world calls upon you,—For his name's sake, for the Gospel's sake, for the church's sake, for religion's sake, which sinks, which decays,—for the sake of all these, recover your souls, and your life!

O friends, what will these loud cries do for you? Shall all leave you such lumps and loiterers? Christians, be yet awakened; call all the grace you have; whet those dull and blunted spirits; set you a better edge upon them. Why may not this work give a whet to you? If you came hither sleepy souls, what a mercy would it be, if you might return home awakened! If you came hither dead, and dull, and listless souls, what a comfort would it be, if you might return home quickened and enlivened! What if you should feel, that this word had kindled a fire in you, had made your hearts burn within you,—burn with holy love, and life: what a mercy would this be to you! What, if you might be sent hence, with ready minds, forward minds, bent upon a more active, and useful, and heavenly life! But what if, after all this, you should go away just as you came hither! Though the bellows have been blowing, yet your ashes are not purged away; though the fire hath been kindled, yet it will not burn! Would you like it, if all this should be lost, and do nothing for you? If this untoward and dull temper of soul should be too hard for the word, and you should return from the Physician of souls, with your diseases uncured! Do what you can, friends, every one of you, to help your own recovery, to raise this lively active frame: and if you can obtain it, then look to your hearts as long as you live, that if it be possible, this wretched distemper of a leaden, unuseful, lifeless, listless, inactive heart, may never return upon you.

ii. How the heart must be guarded.—This I shall answer in these five particulars; namely, (i.) Set a constant watch upon it. (ii.) Keep all your powers up in arms. (iii.) Keep close by your Captain and Physician. (iv.) Carry up your hearts where your enemies cannot come. (v.) Commit the keeping of them to the keeper of Israel.

{ (i.) Set a constant watch upon it.—That is a word which
{ is given to every Christian,—“ *What I say unto you, I say*
{ *unto all, Watch.*” (Mark xiii. 37.) Of all things we have
{ to watch, the heart it is that must chiefly be watched.
{ Our eyes must be chiefly there : whither ever else we have
{ to look, we must especially look upwards, and look
{ inwards. We must look upwards : our eye must be upon
{ God’s eye,—that all-seeing eye which seeth in secret.
{ Whether our eye be or not, God’s eye is ever upon our
{ hearts. “ *I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins.*”
{ (Jer. xvii. 10.) The eye of the Lord is a searching eye ;
{ there is no secret of the heart, but he espieth and searcheth
{ out : and it is a jealous eye, that will not wink at, nor
{ allow, nor indulge the least heart-evils. The sense of that
{ jealous eye would awe us into more watchfulness over
{ ourselves. The reason of our neglect of self-inspection is,
{ that we forget that the Lord looks upon us. We cannot
{ look upwards, but we shall behold the very eye of God
{ upon us. If a hundred men stand looking upon us, and
{ we do not look upon them, we cannot tell whether they
{ look upon us or not ; but if we look steadfastly upon them,
{ we may see in their eye, that they are looking upon us.
{ Look up to God, and you will plainly see that his eye is
{ upon you. The observing of God’s eye upon you will
{ turn your own eyes upon yourselves. Why is it that the
{ Lord looks thus upon me ? What is it he sees in me ? Is
{ it anything he likes, that he looks upon ? Is it his
{ approving eye that is upon me ? Is it a look of love and
{ kindness ? Or is it on that at which he is offended or
{ disliketh ? Is there jealousy, is there displeasure, or anger
{ in that holy eye that is upon me ? Is it a smiling look, or
{ a frowning and angry one, that he casteth upon me ?
{ Look on me I see he doth ; his eye is never off me : let
{ me look upwards when I will, I see that God is looking
{ downwards ; and his eye is directly upon me. His eye is
{ a piercing eye,—it pierceth to my very entrails ; he
{ beholds the very bottom of my heart. I had need look
{ carefully to mine own soul, when there is such an eye
{ upon it night and day. Thus look upwards, and set the
{ Lord before you, as the Psalmist did. (Psalm xvi. 8.)

Then look inwards, and set your heart before yourselves. There is an expression, "*If they shall bethink themselves,*" (1 Kings viii. 47,) which may be interpreted, If they shall return into themselves. The eye of the body cannot see itself; but the eye of the soul may, and must be chiefly upon itself. You that are looking about, this way and that way, you had more need look homewards. There are men that are of great acquaintance in the world, but yet have no acquaintance with their own hearts; whether their souls be in safety, or among thieves; whether their hearts be clean, or all bespotted and defiled; whether they be healthful or sickly souls; whether they be alive or dead; it is more than they can tell, where they be, or in what case they are. How is it with your souls, friends? How fares it with you, in your inner man? Who is there within with you? Are there none but friends? Is Christ there? Is the Spirit of grace there? Is there a good conscience? Or are there not robbers within? Is not thine heart a house full of thieves? Has not the world gotten in? Are not the pleasures of the flesh within? Is not the devil within,—that unclean spirit? Hath he not defiled and defaced the image of God? Is he not sowing his tares in thee? Is not thine heart a defiled, diseased, distempered heart? Is it not a slight, and frothy, and vain heart? Is it not a loose and licentious heart? Is it not an untoward, wayward, listless heart? Look inward, Christians; and look often inward, and see what hearts you have, and how it is with them: "*Commune with your own heart.*" (Psalm iv. 4.) Look into them, and talk with them, and take an account how it fares with them. If I should ask you, How is it with your hearts? Are they alive or dead? Are they clean hearts, holy hearts, tender hearts, heavenly hearts, lively, and strong, and working upwards? Or are they hard hearts,—polluted, defiled hearts,—dull, and slow, and listless hearts? If I should ask you thus, what account could you give? I doubt this is the account that most of you would give:—I cannot tell. God knows how it is with me: for my part, I know not how it is. That heart hath been well looked to meanwhile: hast thou carried it like a wise man

the while? Thou hast great acquaintance in the world: thou takest upon thee to know other men's hearts; and wilt judge and censure them as thou listest. What, man! and yet hast so little acquaintance with thyself? Be thou thine own judge. Hast thou been a wise man the while, to be such a stranger to thyself, that thou dost not know thine own heart? Thou wilt say, The word tells me "*the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*" (Jer. xvii. 9,) how then should I know it? I answer,

i. The more deceitful the heart is, and the harder it is to know, the more it had need be looked into.—ii. Though it cannot be perfectly known, yet there may be much of it known. The heart of man is a great deep, it is true; and though thou canst not easily see to the bottom of it, yet if thou wilt but look down into the deep, thou must see a great way.—iii. If thou canst not see through thine heart with thine own eyes, yet with the eyes of God thou mayest. Take the help of the eyes of the Lord, and thou mayest understand even all that is in thine heart. God, that sees the heart, reveals the heart: and he hath given thee such discoveries of thy heart in his word, he hath made the Scriptures such a looking-glass for thee, that if thou wouldst look into that more, there thou mightest see thyself, and all that is in thee. "*For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*" (Heb. iv. 12.)

Christians, if you would secure your hearts from danger, know them, and be acquainted more thoroughly with them: if you would know your hearts better, look oftener inward; commune with your hearts; go down daily into your own bosoms, take an account of yourselves, question with yourselves, How fares it with my soul? Is there any real saving grace in me? If there be, how fares it with that grace I have? Does it thrive? doth it flourish? is it kept up in life and activity? Doth my light shine? Doth my love flame? Do my thoughts and my affections climb? and are they working upwards? How is it with

my conscience? Is it kept pure? Doth it speak peace? Doth it deal faithfully? Doth it check me? Doth it smite me for the least evils? Doth it comfort me when it is better with me? Have I a good conscience? Have I the testimony of a good conscience? Doth my conscience witness for me that I have been faithful? that my desire, and my care, and endeavour is, and hath been in all things, to approve myself to the eye of God, and to be sincere and upright before him?

O beloved, what a mercy to us would it be, if we would be persuaded to be much in such heart-inspection, and much in such heart-communing! The devil would find the harder work to get in: there is no disease or distemper would then grow upon our hearts; but it would be espied in the beginning, and so the more easily removed. Friends, let me prevail with you in this thing: I beseech you, in the name of the Lord, set more upon this heart-study. Of all the business you have to do in the world, there is nothing more necessary, nothing more advantageous,—and yet I doubt nothing more neglected. Friends, if you have been strangers at home, be no longer strangers: never say again, I cannot tell how it is with my soul: study it till you can tell; and study it diligently, and you shall be able to tell. The Lord will help you to understand yourselves, if you will but more diligently commune with your own hearts. Will you be persuaded to it? Will you resolve upon it, to make this a great piece of your every day's work? Never look for soul-prosperity, never look for soul-security, without a serious and frequent discharge of this great duty. You may hear all your days, and pray for a better heart as long as you live; and all in vain, if you will not watch as well as pray. O that the Lord would so strike home this word upon your hearts, that you might feel this charge, sensibly abiding upon you, to keep your hearts by heart-acquaintance and heart-watchfulness.

My soul is exceedingly concerned about the bringing you upon this duty; and I am in great doubt, that the most of us are very deficient herein,—either neglecting it, or but slightly or seldom being conversant with it. Sure,

{ friends, our tongues would be better employed ; our speech
{ would be with grace, seasoned with salt ; we should have
{ more savoury words coming from us ; we should commune
{ one with another more about the concerns of our souls ;
{ were there more faithful communing with our hearts, our
{ whole conversation would savour more of it. We should
{ be more spiritual and heavenly ; more active for God ; more
{ fruitful, and abounding in every good work : our work for
{ our souls would be carried on with more life, and with
{ more power ; we should live a more self-denying, a more
{ circumspect, a more heedful, and a more watchful life,
{ were there a due watchfulness over our hearts. What
{ shall I say more in this thing ? Be diligent, be careful :
{ be diligent to know the state of your hearts. If I should
{ say, with Solomon, "*Be thou diligent to know the state of*
{ *thy flocks, and look well to thy herds ;*" (Prov. xxvii. 23 ;)
{ would you not hearken to me ? If I should say, Be
{ diligent to look well to your trades, and to your money ;
{ would you not hearken to me in this ? If I should say,
{ Be diligent to take care for your health, and look well to
{ your bodies ; would not this counsel be accepted by you ?
{ How much more then should you hearken to me in this :
{ Be diligent to know the state of your souls ! O friends,
{ be diligent to know, and be diligent to get your souls into
{ a good state, and to secure them in it : be diligent to know
{ what it is that hurts you, and what it is that hinders you,
{ and what it is that endangers your souls ; and take heed
{ of it : and then be diligent to know what it is that will
{ help you, and further you, and advance you, and stablish
{ your souls in peace, and build them up in holiness ; that
{ you may take those advantages, and improve those helps,
{ that are before you. With such watchfulness as this,
{ what a heart-reviving, what a heart-flourishing, what a
{ heart-rejoicing would follow to yourselves ! And what
{ abundant praise, glory, and honour would grow up
{ to the name of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ ! Then
{ would those hearts of yours, which are now too often
{ dens of thieves, shops of vanity, fountains of folly, nests of
{ lusts, and houses of merchandise, become the sacrifices of
{ the Lord, and the temples of the living God ; and he would

dwell in them, and walk in them, and say of them, These are my rest, here will I abide for ever.

(ii.) Keep all your powers up in arms.—Our enemies will fight for our hearts. Sin, the world, and the devil are like Absalom, (2 Sam. xv. 6,)—at first he used fair and flattering speeches, and complimented, and kissed them that came nigh him, saying, “*O that I were made judge in the land!*” (Ver. 4.) His meaning was, O that I were king, what a king would I be to you! So he stole the hearts of the men of Israel. Afterwards he takes up arms, and fights against those whose hearts he could not steal from David. Our spiritual enemies deal alike with us: at first they attempt to steal away our hearts from God. Sin smiles upon us, and fawns upon us, and promiseth what it will do for us,—O that you would hearken to me! how happy should ye be, if you would follow me! It doth not pretend to be king, but to be our servant: if you will love this world, all that is in the world will be your servants. But if this will not do, our enemies will fight for us; our “*fleshly lusts war against the souls,*” (1 Peter ii. 11,) to take them captives; and the world and the devil will side with lust. The devil will buffet, the world will rage and bluster against those who will continue the servants of Christ. Hereupon Christians are said to be soldiers. (2 Tim. ii. 3.) Their state here is a warring and warfaring state. They are to fight,—“*Fight the good fight of faith.*” (1 Tim. vi. 12.) They are to wrestle,—“*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness*” or wicked spirits “*in high places.*” (Eph. vi. 12.) “*The flesh lusteth,*” that is, fighteth, “*against the Spirit;*” (Gal. v. 17;) and the Spirit must lust or fight against the flesh. And all this fighting, what is it for? It is for our hearts. The devil and the world are fighting, and our souls lie at stake. He that overcometh, there is a soul gained, a soul saved: he that is overcome, there is a soul lost. When men fight for their lives, when this must be the issue,—kill or be killed,—how desperately do they fight! We manage our warfare against sin and the devil, as if there were no great matter lying upon it. Men count not them-

selves any great losers if they be overcome; and hereupon it is that we leave ourselves so open to temptation, and stand as so many naked men against our adversaries, and entertain such truce and treaties with them, and make such weak resistance against them, as if our contention were about a flea, or a dead dog. Men do not consider that it is for their precious life the devil and the world is fighting: but that is it that sin and this world would have of you,—they would have your hearts; they fight for your souls.

Now hereupon Christians must be always up in arms, and stand to their arms. As the devil rallies up armies against us, so the Lord provides us with armour, and requires us to put on our armour, and to stand to our arms. "*Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.*" (Eph. vi. 13.) We may neither stand unarmed, nor put on our armour to sleep in: put on your armour, and stand in your armour. Especially must we keep close about us these six pieces; viz.,—

i. The shield of faith.—"*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil.*" (Eph. vi. 16.) The devil is shooting his darts at us, and every dart is levelled at the heart. The devil's darts are fiery darts,—burn when they hit,—that will burn up all the good in the soul. Darts will stick, and fiery darts will burn. When you see one man burn in lust, there is a dart of the devil that burns in his heart: when you see others flame in anger and fury, there is a fiery dart of the devil there,—his "*tongue is set on fire of hell.*" (James iii. 6.) Think on this, you that are apt to be thus set on fire: the next time you are in such a heat, that your hearts burn with fury, and your tongue spits fire, in venting furious language,—then think with yourselves,—I feel my soul in a flame; the fire comes out at my mouth: Lord, whence comes all this? O, I had need look to myself! Sure there is a fiery dart from the devil in mine heart! these angry, hot, and hasty words are no other but the smoke of that fire, which the devil hath kindled within me. Such a thought as this might be as

water to quench the fire. But if such a thought will not do it, then take the shield of faith, by which you may quench these fires. We are therefore exhorted to resist the devil, "*steadfast in the faith.*" (1 Peter v. 9.) Trust upon Christ for your help: stand against the devil, as David against the Philistine. "*Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts.*" (1 Sam. xvii. 45.) That is, I come trusting in the Lord of Hosts; "*This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand.*" There is his faith, and that is his best weapon. Resist the devil, and trust in God: fight against sin, and trust in Christ for victory. "*Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*" (Isa. xxvi. 4.)

ii. The helmet of hope, which is called "*the helmet of salvation.*" (Eph. vi. 17.)—"We are saved by hope." (Rom. viii. 24.) Hope will strengthen the heart, and hold up the head. Christians should withstand temptations and assaults, as men of hope; whatever these may be, whatever buffetings of Satan you may be encountered with, how furiously soever the world falls on, threatening you, thundering against you, persecuting you for your faithfulness to Christ; or fawning upon you, or flattering you away from your integrity; how thick soever the suggestions of your hearts' lusts come upon you, enticing you, urging and pressing you,—Do not undo thyself by thy religion; do not ruin thyself by thy conscience: come about after this world; save thyself from its rage, and accept of its kindness. How hard soever you may be thus tempted and set upon, and how apt soever thy faint heart may be, to fear and doubt thou shalt never be able to stand, hold fast thine helmet; hope in God, who will be thy helper and deliverer. "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?—Hope in God.*" (Psalm xliii. 5.) Strive against sin, but strive in hope; resist temptation, but resist in hope; withstand this evil world, withstand its flatteries, withstand its furies, and withstand in hope. Do not say, as David once did, "*I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul.*" (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) I shall one day or other fall by temptation, I shall never hold out, and so shift for thyself. Hope for

the victory, hope in God for his help, hope in Christ for his strength, and in that hope stand against temptation.

iii. The girdle of truth.—“*Having your loins girt about with truth.*” (Eph. vi. 14.) Look especially to this, that you be armed with truth and uprightness of heart. Whatever other armour you seem to have, whatever faith you have, whatever hope you have, whatever word you have to support you, whatever prayer you make to help you, there is no armour will hide an hypocritical heart from God or the devil. God strikes his dart into the false heart, through the joints of thine armour. As for the devil, he is gotten in already; the devil is already in thine heart, if it be a false and hypocritical heart. O get sincerity, and uprightness before the Lord! See that there be truth in your inward parts. A sound heart will be the best shelter, both against the accusations and temptations of all your adversaries; whereas, if there were no enemies from without, a rotten heart would be its own ruin. That rust, and that moth, which are bred within, will eat thee out, though there should be no thief to assault thee from abroad.

iv. The breastplate of righteousness.—Put them both together, truth and uprightness of heart, and righteousness of life, will be a mighty security against the devil and all his whole party. The Psalmist would trust to no other armour without that, and that he will trust to. “*Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.*” (Psal. xxv. 21.) Faith without truth, hope without righteousness, or uprightness, will never secure us. Sincerity and uprightness of heart, are our best heart-armour: the hypocrite’s faith will not save him, the hypocrite’s hope will perish with him; it is sincerity that will carry the day. Be honest and plain-hearted towards God. Let there not be guile and unrighteousness found in you. “*He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely.*” (Prov. x. 9.) *Hic murus ahæneus esto.* A good conscience is a wall of brass, against all the darts that are cast against us.

v. “*The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*” (Eph. vi. 17.) This was the weapon with which Christ conquered the devil, when he fought him hand to hand. “*It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone. It is*

written, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.*" (Matt. iv. 4, 7, 10.) Be well versed in the Scripture, and you have a sword by you, to resist every temptation. Art thou tempted to pride? Remember, it is written, "*God resisteth the proud.*" (Jas. iv. 6.) Art thou tempted to a covetous worldly life? It is written, "*Take heed and beware of covetousness.*" (Luke xii. 15.) Art thou tempted to anger, and to bitter expressions of it? It is written, "*If ye bite and devour one another, ye*" shall "*be consumed one of another.*" (Gal. v. 15.) Art thou tempted to a carnal, vain, sensual life? It is written, "*If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.*" (Rom. viii. 13.) Art thou tempted to a cold, lukewarm, indifferent temper or way? It is written, "*Because thou art neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*" (Rev. iii. 16.) And so, whatever the temptation be, have a particular word ready at hand, which may be a sword to strike through it.

vi. The spirit of prayer.—"*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit.*" (Eph. vi. 18.) Meet every temptation with the sword in your mouth, and with a prayer in your heart. Believe and pray; hope and pray; be true, be upright, and pray, "*The Lord rebuke thee.*" (Jude 9.) The Lord strengthen and uphold me. Pray to Him, be true to Him, hope in Him, who was tempted himself, and is "*able to succour them that are tempted.*" (Heb. ii. 18.)

Put on all this armour, and stand to your arms; be always up in arms; be always ready to receive the alarm. Let that word be for an alarm to you, and be ever in your ears, Rise, Samson! "*the Philistines are upon thee, Samson.*" (Judges xvi. 12.) Rise, Saul! sin is upon thee, the world is upon thee, thy company is upon thee. Or that word of Christ, "*Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.*" (Matt. xxvi. 46.) The ease that thou lovest, those pleasures that thou lovest, that money thou lovest, that carnal acquaintance that thou lovest, whom thou never suspectest to be enemies,—they have a design to betray thee of thy life, to take away thine heart from God; and they are ever at hand to betray thee: however thou

thinkest thou art armed, take heed of being secure. Of what use is armour to him that is asleep? Remember Saul and his whole army, when they were asleep: David came upon them, and had them at his mercy, for all their arms: and if he had hearkened to Abishai, had smitten him dead in the place. Be never secure; stand upon your watch, or you never stand to your arms. Never think you are out of danger: you are in jeopardy every hour; your enemy the devil is ever walking up and down, and watcheth to devour you. Therefore that counsel is needful, "*Be vigilant, be sober; for your adversary,*" &c. (1 Peter v. 8.) Be always as the besieged in a town, that have their enemy close at the gates and the walls: they are upon their guard night and day. Especially let the main fort, the heart, be still well watched and guarded. Set fear for your sentinel; live in constant fear of a surprise: fear will keep the soul waking: be conversant in the world in fear; be amongst your carnal friends and acquaintance in fear; eat and drink in fear; pass the time of your whole warfare in fear. O, this fearless secure heart, how often it betrays us into mischief! How often have our hearts been even choked up with the world, and surfeited with carnal pleasures, and robbed of its peace, and spoiled of its treasures! and we have exchanged a sprightly, lively, cheerful, healthful soul, for a flat, leaden, earthly, senseless frame, before we were aware; and all because we were secure and without fear! Live in fear daily, and in constant jealousy: be jealous of your friends, be jealous of your enemies, be jealous of this world, be jealous of every sin, be jealous of yourselves. Let a holy jealousy dwell in your eye, and let it keep you waking and watching. After all your professing, and praying, and believing, and hoping, would you not lose your hearts at last; and lose all you have hoped and laboured for? Then, beware of security. If you would be in safety, then be never secure; but always stand with your loins girded, and your lights burning. Stand upon your watch-tower: keep your doors shut, but your windows open. Let your eye observe the approaches; and be ready and prepared for the assaults, that your enemies

are making daily upon you. I never expect that you should be flourishing or conquering Christians, till you are persuaded to be jealous Christians, fearing and watchful Christians; and therefore, what I said to you before, I say to you again and again,—Stand upon your guard, and watch.

(iii.) Keep close by your captain and physician.

i. Keep by the side of Christ.—You know what a stream there once ran down from His precious side,—a stream of blood and water. This stream (as to the virtue and influence of it) is running daily: and it is for the healing of diseased, and for the washing of spotted souls. There is no balm that will heal our diseases; the blood of Christ must do it: there is no soap that will scour off our spots; this water must cleanse us. This physic will heal every disease, this water will cleanse us from every spot, and will present us at last without spot or wrinkle. (Eph. v. 27.) But what will diseased polluted souls do, when their physician is out of the way? Many sick persons die of those diseases, which, had they been near the physician, might have been cured. Keep you ever near to Christ: his presence will be either preventing physic, warding off your soul-diseases, that they seize not upon you, or else it will be curing physic, so that no disease shall be mortal to you. We never wander from Christ, but we catch that which we cannot easily claw off. If the devil can but catch a Christian wandering, what sad work doth he make with him! We may all say of our wanderings from Christ, as Naomi, “*I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?*” (Ruth i. 21.) I went out whole, but I returned wounded; I went out fat and full, but I returned lean and naked. What a sad plight do we see loose and wandering souls in! Keep you home. When Dinah, Jacob’s daughter, would be gadding abroad, what a blot got she! (Gen. xxxiv. 1.) She went out a virgin: how did she return? Our very departings from Christ, are our playing the harlot against him. Our other lovers, to whom we turn aside, do ruin us. What harlots do many of our hearts

often become! We cannot stay by our Lord: out we must be running after other lovers; and so are defiled. O prevent your soul-pollutions, by keeping at home. Art thou gotten near to Christ? know when thou art well, and keep thee there. As Naomi said to Ruth,—“*And Naomi said unto Ruth, her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field;*” (Ruth ii. 22;) gleaning after other reapers, gadding after other lovers: he will take that unkindly if thou dost; and thou mayest smart for it. Hath Christ done by thee, as Boaz by Ruth, spread his skirt over thee, and charged thee,—Keep fast by me, and by my servants: dare not to be gadding after others;—you will smart for it if you do. And if ever you return, it will be by a weeping cross. Whatever wounds you receive, you will not say, These are the wounds “*with which I was wounded in the house of my friend;*” (Zech. xiii. 6;) but, These wounds I have gotten in my absence from my friend. If I had kept me in, I had saved all this hurt. O, prevent the miseries, that you sustain by departing from Christ, by keeping close to him! And if you have been wandering and caught any hurt, O, return to your Physician; and when thou art made whole, then say to thine heart, as Christ to the man, “*Sin no more,*” Wander no more, “*lest a worse thing come unto thee.*” (John v. 14.)

Christians! In our first coming to Christ, and our union with him, our deadly disease is cured; we that were dead, are made alive,—we that were sick, are made sound. But the same Jesus that gave us this life and health, is he that must maintain our souls in life; and the life and spiritual health which we received from Christ by our union, must be preserved by our communion with him. See that you be in union with Christ, that you be by faith joined to the Lord, and then live in constant communion with him. Take heed of ruptures and breaches,—take heed of distance and estrangement from Christ. Have you received Christ within you? O, keep him there. Let your beloved lodge within you, and keep his dwelling in your souls; and let there not be in you “*an evil heart of unbelief;*” let there not be in you a heart of

vanity or iniquity,—a heart of pride or guile,—a carnal or worldly heart, “*in departing from the living God.*” (Heb. iii. 12.) Keep your hearts true to Christ, keep your hearts chaste, keep them pure in his sight. In your union or espousals to Christ you covenanted against forsaking him: “*I will betroth thee unto me for ever.*” (Hos. ii. 19.) So you have said the same to him,—Lord, I betroth thee unto me for ever. Betrothing, or espousing, is both the nearest union, and the firmest union.

(i.) It is the nearest union.—Our becoming Christians is our union of hearts with the Lord. Christ hath therein given you his heart, and you have therein given him your heart, and your heart and his become as one heart. You that are Christians, are near unto Christ as his own soul. “*But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*” (1 Cor. vi. 17.) He loveth you, he careth for you, he tendeth you as his own soul.

(ii.) It is the firmest union.—I will betroth thee for ever. It is written concerning Christ and his saints, as concerning husband and wife,—“*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man,*” no, nor devil, “*put asunder.*” (Mark x. 9.)

Now when there is such a nearness of relation, and such a dearness of affection, there must be also association. You must live together, and dwell together, with Christ. This is not only your duty as Christians, but your safety depends upon it. He who is your husband, is your refuge, where you may dwell safely; your only rock, in whom you may hide yourselves from danger. If you forsake your rock, take heed you be not forsaken of your rock. Take heed you neither prove runaways from Christ, and forsake him utterly; nor slink away, and skulk out, or turn aside from him. Keep constant to Christ, and keep close to him. Let there be intimacy and dearness maintained betwixt Christ and your soul; keep you in the memory of Christ; let your beloved be ever before your eye; be looking daily towards him; “*keep yourselves in the love of God;*” (Jude 21;) be much in solacing yourselves in the contemplation of his love, and keep your hearts in a flame of love to him. Be tender how you

provoke him to jealousy against you. Keep you close to Christ, by making all your carnal things keep their distance from your hearts. Keep you in the diligent exercise of all the acts of Christianity, whereby your communion with Christ is maintained; let there be nearness to Christ in point of conversation; walk with Christ, yea, walk in Christ, as the expression is,—“*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*” (Col. ii. 6.) Whilst others walk in the flesh, let Christians walk in the spirit. Walk in Christ, both in union with Christ—living in the strength of Christ, and in conformity to Christ—in all well-pleasing before him. Let no place be a place for you, let no way be a way for you, let no company be company for you, where Christ would not be pleased to find you. Let no temper or frame of spirit grow upon you, but what Christ would be pleased to find in you. Would Christ be pleased to find you among the vain company of the vile ones of the earth? Would Christ be pleased to find you in a careless, senseless, untoward, jolly, frothy,—or in a sour, angry, envious, impatient temper? Keep you from such ways, keep you from such company, keep you out of temptation, and have as little to do as possible with them. Keep you out of vain and evil ways, company, and temptation; and keep you on with life, and vigour, and power in the ways of Christ. Let not your ways only please Christ, but your walking in them: do not be *slugs*, and drones, and triflers in Christianity: follow the Lord, and follow him fully: follow the Lord, and let your souls follow hard after him. Be doing the will of Christ, and let your hearts stand complete in all his will. The most watchful, diligent, painful, lively Christians, are they that keep nearest to the Lord.

Friends, be warned to keep you thus near to God. The Lord calls you such, “*A people near unto him.*” (Psalm cxlviii. 14.) Approve yourselves to be such: since the Lord hath made you near, keep near to him. Live in union and communion with Christ, in intimacy of acquaintance with Christ; and with all possible care, that your whole course may be such as may be a walking

worthy his great name, and be well-pleasing to him. This is the way to keep out of danger. And whatever befalls you, whilst you are thus walking in Christ, you will be still near your remedy: whilst you are near Christ, he will not be far from you, but will be ready to help, and ready to comfort you. You complain, it may be, every one of you, that your hearts are out of order. One cries, O my heart, what a proud heart it is! Another complains, O mine heart, it is a fretful, peevish heart! Another says, O mine heart is an earthly, worldly heart! Another, O my heart is a sluggish, slothful heart! Another, O what shall I do? mine heart is a dead and a hard heart! Why, bring them all to the physician? Where be the diseased or distressed souls among you? What, be you all well? Is there no soul-disease upon you? O, there is not one of you but has his soul-distempers, and sad ones too: come then to your physician for a cure? If any of you were sick of the palsy, or dropsy, fever, or consumption, and Christ were standing here, as of old, every such diseased body would be thronging upon him. Come, ye poor blind hardened souls,—come lay yourselves before the Lord, and cry unto him, “*Lord, that our eyes may be opened!*” (Matt. xx. 33.) Lord, that mine hard heart might be broken! that my dead heart might be quickened! Whoever of you hath a complaint to make, hath a wound, hath a disease, or hath a weakness, or discomfort, come every one of you, whatever may ail you! Come, bring in all the lame, and the blind, and the diseased, defiled, and distressed hearts: bring them to the physician; come and lay them all at the feet of Christ. Lord, help me! Lord, heal me! Lord, wash me! But be sure you come with a purpose to keep by him. When ye come to him, come unto Christ, and he will heal you; and then keep you by him, and he will preserve you from relapses into the same, or a worse disease, which, if you wander from him again, is like to come upon you.

ii. Keep under Christ's banner.—Keep to your colours. The banner of Christ hath upon it, or his colours bear upon them, as his coat of arms, the Covenant, the Cross, and the Crown; with this motto, *Pugnanti victoria, vincenti*

corona. "Victory to him that fights: the crown to the conqueror." The covenant is for our union with Christ, the cross for our trial, the crown for our encouragement. And here I shall give you three directions.

(i.) Let the covenant be upon your hearts.—The covenant is,

First. For the strength of our hearts.—It notes our enlisting ourselves under Christ as his servants, and Christ undertaking the conduct of us. When we understand what we are engaged in; to what hard service we have bound ourselves; what a painful active life, as Christians, we must count upon; our hearts will be apt to fail us, and cry out, as the Apostle with regard to the work of the ministry, "*Who is sufficient for these things?*" (2 Cor. ii. 16.) I shall never be able to bear through such a life. But then remember your covenant, your baptismal covenant I mean, which doth not only engage you to the Lord, but engageth the Lord to you. Look to the Captain of your salvation, who hath bound himself to help you through, who hath said, "*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*" (Heb. xiii. 5.) Then you shall be able to say, with the same Apostle, "*I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me.*" (Phil. iv. 13.) Venture not on anything in your own strength; fear not, nor be dismayed whilst you have the Lord Jesus your strength. Christians, be not disheartened; fear not to engage in the strictest and severest course of Christianity; lean upon the Lord, and he will help you through. Set your hearts to the work, and leave the care of success to him that careth for you. Remember this,—let your trust in Christ, your hold on the covenant, be the strength on which you lean, for carrying you through the whole of your Christian course.

Second. This covenant will be the guide of your heart.—What is it that I have to do? How is it that I must live? Why, look into your covenant? What is it that you have engaged to do? How is it that you have covenanted to live? You have covenanted holiness and righteousness; you have covenanted against an idle life, or doing nothing; against a trifling life, or doing your work by halves;

against a worldly, or fleshly, or wicked life; the world, flesh, and devil,—these you have all covenanted against. You have covenanted the crucifying the flesh and the world, the resisting the devil, and to follow Christ against them all. You have covenanted to fight against the flesh and the world, and to fight to the victory;—not to be less fleshly than other men, to be less worldly than other men; but you have covenanted against a fleshly and worldly life. Think not of carrying it fair with both; of cutting out a middle way betwixt Christ and the world, betwixt a fleshly and a heavenly life: it is a total victory over this flesh, and this world,—over a fleshly and a worldly life,—which you have covenanted to pursue. Whenever you are at a stand, and are in doubt, as to any particular actions, or way of life, that you have before you, and are questioning whether you should go on, or forbear,—why then examine, Would this be serving my flesh, or serving the Lord? Determine that well, and then your covenant would guide you, whether to do or forbear. Once let your hearts stand resolved to pursue the ends of your covenant,—to live such a holy, such a heavenly, such a mortified, such a self-denying, such a diligent life, as you have covenanted to live,—and then your very hearts, which are the records of your covenant, will teach you what you ought to do.

When your flesh at any time pleads with you, for any abatement of the strictness of Christianity,—for any liberty of compliance with the more remiss and loose amongst Christians; and suggests to you, Not too far, not too fast, not too high in religion: drive on softly, deal gently with thy flesh; be not over rigid or severe to it: be not over-busy; do not tire thyself at thy work: take time, take thine ease, drive on as thy carnal interest, and thy carnal inclinations, can bear:—then read over your covenant, and consider, Is such a life according to the writing that hath been agreed upon betwixt my Lord and me? Is this cold, and indifferent, and easy way of religion, all that I have covenanted for? Well, this is one thing, if you would keep to your colours, keep to your covenant.

(ii.) Take up your cross on your back.—This is your Lord's word,—“*If any man will come after me, let him deny*

himself, and take up his cross." (Matt. xvi. 24.) This will be the proof of what there is of Christ or Christianity in your heart: a sound heart will make a strong back. He that loves much, will bear anything: he whose heart is not *cross-proof*, is an unsound Christian. Your sinful shunning the cross, is running from your colours.

Christians, some little trials we have had, some crosses we have met with; but for aught I know, the Lord may be preparing heavier crosses, greater sufferings, for us than ever we have been proved withal. O, be so busy in fortifying your hearts, that you may never balk your Christian course, whatever cross may stand in the way. I would not that we should needlessly run upon the cross, when we may avoid it. Sufferings may come fast enough, without our pulling them upon ourselves. But this I would,—we might every one stand to, and resolve in the strength of the Lord, to be nevertheless hearty Christians, nevertheless holy, nevertheless precise, nevertheless zealous in the pursuit and practice of a sincere and exemplary godly life, for anything we may suffer for it from men or devils. I do not barely say, Take up your cross rather than lay down your Christianity; but, Take up your cross rather than lay down your bold profession of Christianity; take up your cross rather than lay down your zeal for Christ, or turn aside from the closest and most resolved following of Christ. Let the cross neither make us who are Christians to become no Christians, nor to be less Christians than we have seemed to be. It hath been so in former ages, that Christianity hath never improved nor thrived so much, as under the sharpest and severest persecutions; and why should it not be so still? Look to yourselves, friends: there is hazard that your souls may suffer, that you may be inward losers by your oversolicitousness to escape outward losses. The souls of many professors may be losers, and the souls of some may be quite lost, by the fears of the cross. Look to yourselves, that this be not your case,—that you be not losers by persecutions; especially take heed that you be not lost—your souls lost—by them. Be not persecuted from Christ,

be not persecuted to hell; let not the cross drive you back under the curse, from which you hoped that you had been delivered.

And that you may not be losers, do what you can to be gainers, as other Christians have been before you. If it come to be winter without, get you to be warmer within: if the winds rise, keep your garments closer about you. Think not to make your peace with evil men, by striking sail, and following Christ more aloof; but make your peace with God more sure, that you may be the more able to bear the reproaches of the world. Be as the stars, that are never so bright as when the night is darkest. Love one another, help one another, quicken, and comfort, and encourage one another so much the more, as the world hateth, and goeth about to hinder you: and never think, after all that hath been said about the governing and guarding, the sanctifying and keeping your hearts, that your hearts are yet right, till you can "*hold fast your integrity*," (Job ii. 3, xxvii. 5,) and hold on your way in all changes of weather.

(iii.) Keep the crown in your eye, and let that word be ever in your ear,—"*Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.*" (Rev. iii. 11.) Run from your colours, and you lose the crown. He that hath heaven in his eye, will not fear to have holiness in his life. The hope of the victory will encourage in the fight; the hope of the crown will make the cross easy, and us faithful in the covenant. Therefore, remember that word, —"*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*" (Rev. ii. 10.) Christians, if you would not lose the crown, be faithful,—be faithful to the death in the covenant of your Lord. Whatever difficulties or discouragements you may meet with in your way, whatever hardships or tribulations may befall you, if you can yet say with the church, "*All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way.*" (Psalm xliv. 17, 18.) If you can but utter this, your Lord will say to you, Whatever I have done, or brought upon you, yet I have

not forgotten thee; the "*covenant of my peace*" shall never "*be removed.*" (Isa. liv. 10.) "*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*" (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.)

(iv.) Carry up your hearts thither, where your enemies cannot come.—Carry them up to heaven: whatever treasure you lay up there, "*neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and thieves do not break through nor steal.*" (Matt. vi. 20.) There is no safety below, the thief will be every where upon you whilst you are conversant in the world, walking after the flesh; these are your enemies' quarters. Your hearts are in the midst of them,—in the midst of those thieves that seek your life, whilst they are conversant about these fleshly things. Yea, whilst you are where God is,—in your duty, in ordinances,—if your hearts be not above at such times, if you feed only on what comes down, if you ascend not in your duties, if you ascend not by ordinances, if you get not up to have communion with God in them, this flesh and this world will be thrusting in upon you, and stealing your hearts away. Christ hath been riding down to you this day, as the chariots and horses of fire once were sent down for Elijah. The chariots came down to take the Prophet up in them. The ordinances of God, that you have been at this day, were the chariot of God, that was sent down on purpose that those hearts of yours might ascend into glory. I hope some of your hearts got into the chariot, and are ascended with your Lord, who came to fetch them up. What, Christian! is thine heart yet below? Where was it when the chariot came? What! are your souls yet among the sheep and the oxen? among the grass of the field, and the dust of the earth? What! yet among the worms? What! yet creeping upon this earth, and feeding upon ashes? Do your souls still dwell in these tombs and sepulchres? I hope there may be some among you who can say, I thank the Lord, my heart is no longer here; it is risen, it is ascended with Him who came down

for it, and hath carried it up with him. But, man, how is it with thee, whose heart is left behind? Christ hath been here, and those that were wise took the season, and got with him into the chariot. But is thine heart still upon this earth? and must it away again to its old trading, to its old feeding on this dirt and trash? Hast thou been tasting of that angels' food, that hidden manna, the bread of God that came down from heaven; and canst thou now return to thy quails, or thy husks? Sure thou hadst not a taste of that heavenly food, if thou dost not disrelish and reject thine old carnal delights!

But are your hearts, any of you, yet left below? Behold, a chariot from God is still before you,—this ordinance of preaching. Behold, the same Jesus in this chariot is come down again for those hearts that are not yet risen. Thy Lord is loth to leave thee here: wilt thou ascend with him? Why is there not a cry among you, Lord, help me into thy chariot! Lord, take my soul up with thee! Lord, let me not be left behind! Let Christ hear that voice from you, Lord, take me up with thee! here this poor wretched heart of mine lies at thy feet: I cannot lift it up, it is too heavy for me; it hath weights, but no wings: yet it groans after thee; it would not that thou shouldst ascend without it. Lord, lift me up! Lord, carry this poor and wretched heart from earth to heaven! What, must I yet dwell in Meshech, and have my heart amongst the tents of Kedar? Must I yet live amongst these thieves and robbers? O, where is that love that hath brought thee down again for me! Lovest thou me, O Lord? and wilt thou yet leave me at this distance from thee? O, take pity! O, take me up, that I may from henceforth "*be with thee where thou art!*" Christians, O that I could set you, even every one of you, crying thus after the Lord, and bemoaning these earthly and carnal hearts, that they are not yet ascended! Let Christ yet hear that voice, and let it come deep, even from the bottom of thy soul. Let Christ hear, not that mouth crying, nor those eyes weeping, but that soul exclaiming, Lord, take up me also with thee! and he will take thee up. O, get you into the Psalmist's posture and spirit. "*As the hart panteth*

after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalm xlii. 1, 2.) "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." (Psalm lxxxiv. 2.) When, Lord? O, let this be the day: take me this hour, and carry me up to the mountains of spices! Christians, be but unfeignedly willing that Christ should carry away those hearts from this earth, be but in good earnest with him, when you say, Lord, take me up! and he will not leave you behind.

Get these hearts to heaven, and keep them there. Get you from earth to heaven, and come not down again from heaven to earth. Let that blessedness be antedated, which is promised to be after the resurrection. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord." (1 Thess. iv. 17.) Say to the Lord, even from henceforth, as he says to his church, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it." (Psalm cxxxii. 14.) Let it not be a visit to heaven that will satisfy you, but a residence in heaven. "Our conversation is in heaven." (Phil. iii. 20.) Let it not be a few heavenly hours, or a short heavenly repast, but a heavenly life that you design and follow after. When you get once thus near unto the Lord, live as much as possible in the constant views of his glory; so continually beholding and feeding upon the foretastes and forethoughts of his goodness and grace, that you may be changed daily "from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

Know, friends, that if there be any security in the world from the robbers and the spoilers, from your lusts and temptations, from suffering such losses again in your peace, the only security you have is to keep your hearts above. Hast thou gotten thine heart to heaven? keep thee where thou art; keep thee out of harm's way. If the devil can but catch those hearts again below,—discover you a-roving, find you wandering after your carnal things; if he can but meet you declining from a heavenly to an earthly conversation, from a spiritual to a carnal conversation;—O, what sad spoils of whatever good days

you have had, of whatever delight, and satisfaction, and joy, and comfort you have had,—what spoil will he make of them all! Christians, whenever you can get, or do feel, your hearts in a better frame,—most full of the love, and life, and joy of the Lord,—think what pity it is, what a sad fall it will be, to make an exchange of this blessed state, for the barren and brackish pleasures of this world! Think with yourselves, Shall I forsake the sweetness of the fig-tree, and the fulness of the olive, and go and browse upon brambles?

The design, friends, of all this is, to persuade and invite you to live in constant communion with God. You have been received and entertained this day in special communion with Him; and the intent and meaning of this solemn communion is, that by the sweetness and refreshing you find in it, you may be set into a way of ordinary communion with him. That your life may be a life of communion with God, a life of faith, a life of love, a life of holiness and joy, that so you might prophesy to yourselves, with the Psalmist, "*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*" (Psalm xxiii. 6.)

Brethren, do you in good earnest desire to possess such a life as this? Do you heartily wish it might be thus with you? Have you any hope that you shall obtain, and will you follow after it? Will you go hence, as men and women designing any such thing? Shall we that have been with the Lord together this day, now agree together, in the name of the Lord, to be reaching forward, with one heart and with one soul, towards such a heavenly life? Shall we help one another, and quicken one another, and set examples one to another, of such spirituality and heavenliness? What do ye think would be the fruit of our appearance before the Lord this day? might we return to our houses with our hearts full of such holy resolutions,—with our hearts flaming in such holy desires? O grieve to think of returning again to your old carnal, and sensual, and worldly frames; to your cold, and indifferent, and lukewarm, and lifeless way of religion! Let not the devil catch you again wandering,

or carelessly jogging on at your wonted rate. If he do, look for it, that whatsoever of the divine life or love, of the divine hope or joy, hath been kindled in you this day, you will be quickly spoiled and robbed of it: and those poor and weakly hearts will fall into a worse condition than before. If you would keep anything about you that might comfort you, if you would secure your souls from being rifled of all that you have received, if you would not return to be dark, and dead, and barren souls, then remember this counsel you have received from the Lord, to whom my prayer for you is that which David offered for Israel, "*O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.*" (1 Chron. xxix. 18.) Keep these thoughts fresh upon your hearts, and you shall thereby keep your hearts, after the Lord hath spoken grace unto you, from returning again to folly.

(v.) Lastly, Commit the keeping of your hearts to the keeper of Israel.—Commit them to God. "*Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*" (Psalm cxxvii. 1.) The keeping of the heart is a greater trust than the keeping of a city, and therefore had need be put into safe hands. God is able to keep it. "*I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*" (2 Tim. i. 12.) God is able, and God is faithful,—"*Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it.*" (1 Thess. v. 24.) But it may be you will say, O, I shall never be able to keep mine heart in heaven,—keep up the love, and life, and joy of God in my soul,—keep myself pure,—keep me close to God, that the devil never catch me wandering abroad! Why, I see he may catch me every hour: mine heart is given to wandering, and I cannot hold it in. It would be an ease, and a joy, and a great delight to me, could I be raised to such a pitch; as to be all spiritual and heavenly; and there to fix, and be ever with the Lord. O what a joy it would be to me, had I but hope that I might attain to such a state! but woe is me, I shall never be able. Why, do your duty;

and for such a comfortable success, let that care lie on the Lord. Commit it to him, both to help you in such a frame, and to keep you in it. Hath he said he will not fail you? He hath sealed to you this day, that he will help you, that he will keep you: trust upon him, and he will do it. But what is it to commit the keeping of our hearts to the Lord?

i. To give them to the Lord.—God will keep nothing but what is his own. Wilt thou give thine heart to the devil, and then commit it to God to keep it for him? Give your hearts to the Lord, give them to him for his servants, and then commit them to his custody.

ii. To trust him with the keeping of them.—“*Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.*” (Psalm cxliii. 9.) I have many enemies, that lie in wait for my soul: I dare not trust to myself for security. God is my trust and my refuge; I flee unto Him to hide me,—I will “*trust under the shadow of his wings.*” (Psalm xxxvi. 7.)

Therefore, brethren, my exhortation to you shall be the same with Peter's exhortation to suffering Christians,—“*Commit the keeping of your souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*” (1 Peter iv. 19.) Observe it: commit, but in well-doing. Do not neglect your duty, and think to make it up with this,—I have committed the care of myself to God. I say, Do not neglect your hearts: be not idle and careless of your own duty: do not leave yourselves open to the usurpation of lust, or the invasion of the devil: do not suffer your hearts to lead you on in your carnal ways: leave not that heart to be a blind house, a dark hole, and filthy dungeon, full of abominations; and then think to make up the matter by saying, I have committed it to the Lord, to wash it, and cleanse it, and keep it: I trust God with my soul; he, I hope, will preserve it. Commit the keeping of your souls, in well-doing: do your duty: keep your hearts under government, keep them under guard: be washing your hearts daily, be watching your hearts daily. Though God be also, yet you are every one your own keepers. Do your part to keep that which God hath committed to

you, and then fear not but God will do his part: he will keep whatever you have committed to him.

And thus I have at length run through this great duty of keeping the heart. The Lord knows how great need there is of every word that hath been spoken. O that none of it might be lost! Our poor hearts, God knows, have hitherto found us but poor heart-keepers. The case they are in is evidence sufficient to prove how sadly they have been looked to. Some of them continuing in a lost state to this day; others of them but half recovered; others relapsed, and fallen back from what they were once hopefully recovered to; none of our hearts but have often been among thieves, where we have suffered great loss; and how many have been the heart-distempers and diseases we have fallen into? O, what slight, what licentious, what listless, dull, and lazy souls have we been! Sure these hearts have found us but bad keepers. O, what shall be the success of the many words that have been spoken? What say you, Christians? Is there any hope that your hearts shall be better looked to for the future? What say you? Will you now be faithful? Will you keep this charge of the Lord? keep this "*heart with all diligence?*" (Prov. iv. 23.) Who is there among you that will say, I confess my faults and my great neglects this day? I confess I have been careless; the sad frame my heart is in, is a witness against me; but through the grace of God, I will look better to myself, and hope I shall not forget this word as long as I live. I hope I shall leave meddling with other men's matters, and leave off censuring other men's ways; and from henceforth keep my eye more close and constant upon my own soul. This do,—be more faithful in keeping yourselves, and then you may be bold to "*commit the keeping of your souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*" (1 Peter iv. 19.)

What hath been my design and desire in this whole work, but, 1. To prepare your hearts for the Lord, that he may accept them. 2. To bring them over to the Lord, that they may become his own. 3. To preserve them for the Lord, to keep them pure, that he may take pleasure in

them. O let this be done, and then you may commit them to the Lord to keep them safe.

Will you be persuaded, will you be prevailed upon, thus to prepare and bring over your hearts to the Lord? thus to preserve and keep them pure and faithful to him? and so trust to his faithfulness? Might I prevail with you in this, I had done my work, and having put you thus into safe custody, should there be bold to leave you, in the confidence that you should thenceforth be "*kept, by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.*" (1 Peter i. 5.)



A
COMPANION
FOR
PRAYER:

OR,

Directions for Improvement in
Grace, and Practical God-
liness in time of Extraordi-
nary Danger.

By *RICHARD ALLEIN*,
Author of *Vinditiæ Pietatis*.

L O N D O N;

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

LECTURE NOTES

PHYSICS 354

STATISTICAL MECHANICS

BY

DAVID A. LEBLANC

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

CHICAGO, ILL.

1980

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

REVEREND SIR,

THE motion made in yours concerning prayer, hath much affected me, and hath occasioned some workings of my thoughts, which though, in a conscience of mine own weakness, I more than once laid aside, yet they still returned upon me; and I do now here offer the result of them to your consideration.

We all know and teach, that they are only returning and reforming prayers that will prevail with God; and it is to be doubted, that in this dead and decayed age, there are too many professors who will join in the design of prayer, whom this must serve instead of reformation: it is to such especially that the directions in the inclosed paper are intended. I send them to you, desiring you to read them, and then to do what you please with them; beseeching you, and trusting upon your friendly faithfulness herein, that you will take your full freedom, either to keep them in silence to yourself, or else to communicate and make them public. I should thankfully accept of any expunging, alteration, or addition that you

shall think needful. The Lord pardon the failings, and accept the sincere aims of my soul herein. To his grace I commend you ; and in him I rest,

Dear Sir,

Your unworthy friend and servant,

RICHARD ALLEIN.

A COMPANION FOR PRAYER:

OR,

DIRECTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN GRACE AND PRACTICAL
GODLINESS.

To make way for, and to press to the diligent observing the following directions, let these things be premised:—

1. That the power of religion is much fallen, at least it is at a stand, among multitudes of professors in England.—Sure this needs no proof, when we have so many sad ocular demonstrations before us.

2. That for this, the Lord hath a controversy with us at this day. (Rev. ii. 4.)—Whatever controversy the Lord hath with the Belials amongst us, whose horrible wickedness hath even ripened them for vengeance, his special quarrel seems to be with his own people. We may guess against whom the chief anger is, by observing at whose faces chiefly his arrows are levelled. Against whom do our enemies (the rod of his anger) make a wide mouth, and draw forth the tongue, and lift up their fiercest hands?

3. No prayers will avail, nor have the least help in them, but the prayers of those, with whom the Lord's controversy is taken up and composed.—Those with whom he hath a particular quarrel, are like to be unhappy mediators for others. We choose the favourites of princes to be our intercessors with them.

4. There can be no taking up God's controversy, unless the matter of it be removed by repentance and reformation.—
“And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine

eyes; cease to do evil. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. i. 15, 16, 18.) "*And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.*" (Josh. vii. 10—12.) Is there no accursed thing amongst even the professors of religion? Behold, the wedge of gold, and the Babylonish garment,—their pride and their covetousness, hid in their hearts for a tent! Go search out these, and every other accursed thing within you: let them be destroyed if ye would have the Lord to be at peace.

5. If there may be such a spirit of prayer stirred up amongst us, as may have fruit unto holiness, and real reformation of the evil of our ways;—this would comfort us, and give us great hope in the hardest cases.

6. Therefore in all our crying to God for help, in case of public fears, dangers, or distresses, our eye should be first upon, and we should wrestle with the Lord, for the pardoning, purging, and sanctification of our own hearts and lives;—wherein if we prevail not, we shall be as a rotten tooth, or a bone out of joint, for any help there is in us, or for anything we do. Unless we can pray up a spirit of holiness in ourselves, a spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind, we are not like to do anything to purpose, in praying down mercy for the people. The devil will give us leave to visit the throne of grace, so we will but carry our hard and uncircumcised hearts with us: if we cannot get among the Lord's holy ones, though we make many prayers, he will not hear. The interest and hopes of the people of God lie, in the shedding abroad of the sanctifying and quickening Spirit upon them: for this, therefore, should we firstly pray.

7. It is not praying alone that will do: to the bringing about our reformation, there must be a constant and sedulous use of all God's other means, and that in our whole course of life.

8. Some of these means are presented in the following directions; viz.,—

I. *General Directions.*

Direction 1. Take up a deep and sober design of making an advance in serious religion.—Sit not down by, take not up with, what you have already attained; but resolve for reaching forward, and following after, towards that which you have not attained. Content not yourselves to drive gently on, as your flesh will bear; but stir up yourselves to follow hard after the Lord; and let this be the deliberate decree and intent of your hearts. Say to thine heart, How is it with me? Doth my soul prosper? Are my ways such as please the Lord? What is my expectation and my hope? What is the aim and business of my life? Is it that Christ may be magnified by me, and that I may be made a partaker of his holiness, and show forth his virtues in my generation? Can I say, with the Apostle, "*To me to live is Christ?*" (Phil. i. 21.) Ah wretch that I am! How deeply hath this self, and this world, gone shares with my Lord! O, how little of my time, my parts, my strength, yea, and of my very heart, have been inclosed and consecrated as holiness to the Lord! How much of me hath been left out in common for the world! Well, but what meanest thou for the future? Wilt thou henceforth change the purpose and intent of thine heart? Come, man! wilt thou take up a design for, and henceforth determine and set thine heart upon, a more watchful, fruitful, and heavenly life? If thou wilt not be brought to decree and resolve upon a better life, much less wilt thou be persuaded actually to it. What is begun well, is half done; and a holy design deeply laid, is a good beginning.

Direction 2. Let God's calls to extraordinary prayer, and a sense of the necessity of your recovery and reformation, to your prevailing in prayer, quicken you in the vigorous pursuance of your holy design.—Now is a time wherein

you have your hearts at the advantage, having such weighty arguments before you, and the opportunity of doing two such great things more, as the saving yourselves, and also the people, both from iniquity and calamity.

Direction 3. Do all in pursuance hereof, in the name of the Lord Jesus.—Be not discouraged at any prospect of difficulty; trust in him for help. Encourage your hearts with the words of the Apostle, “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*” (Phil. iv. 13.)

Direction 4. Keep your eye and your heart much upon God and the other world.—Be able to say, with the Apostle, “*Our conversation is in heaven;*” (Phil. iii. 20;) that is, there the business of our life lies; and that not only above spiritual and heavenly things, but with God himself. Live at the fountain and spring head: thence all your light, and life, and holiness, and strength must flow. Be much in looking upwards, beholding in a glass the glory of the Lord, and you will be changed into the same image, from glory to glory. (2 Cor. iii. 18.) Look much and often upon the things that are not seen, if you would be delivered from the power and malign influence of the things that are seen: let your eye be upon the sun, and you will see a dimness and darkness upon the earth: get you clothed with the sun, and you will have the moon under your feet.

Direction 5. See that sin be not allowed in your heart or practice.—“*If I regard iniquity in mine heart, the Lord will not hear me,*” (Psalm lxvi. 18,) nor help me. An allowed sin is as dead flesh in a wound: whatever methods or medicine be taken, there will be no healing till the dead flesh be eaten off. You may profess, and pray, and hear all your life long, and yet will never prosper whilst you are privy to any one indulged sin.

Direction 6. Be constant and instant in daily, secret, and family prayer.—Let not extraordinary prayer excuse your ordinary; and let not your neglect of ordinary prayer unfit you for that which is extraordinary. Let not your way to your closet be untrod. He that holds his acquaintance in heaven by being often with God, will be most like to prevail with God in pressing and difficult cases: those

that are much in prayer, are the men who are mighty in prayer.

Direction 7. In all your praying, both ordinary and extraordinary, let your eye be, I say not chiefly, but firstly, upon the case of your own souls.—What improvement you obtain here will be of this double advantage:—(1.) There will be the more hope of your being heard for the public. (2.) If the Lord be not prevailed with for public mercies and deliverances, you will be the better prepared for suffering. If God should show mercy to the public, and scatter our clouds, blow over our storms,—cause our light to break forth as the morning, and our righteousness also as the noon-day,—what would all this be to thee, who art unrighteous? What would it be to thee, if in all the land of Goshen there should be light, and thou in the midst thereof shouldest be covered over with the darkness of Egypt? if there should be dew on all the grass of the field, and thy fleece only should be dry? If thou shouldest live to see thy people a saved people, and a holy and fruitful nation, and thou shouldest stand as a withered and dry tree amongst all the flourishing cedars? Get up thine own heart into good proof; or, whatever spiritual plenty thou mayest see in Israel, yet thou wilt not eat thereof. Talk no more of thine hopes of seeing good days: how little would that be to thee, unless thou get thee a better heart!

Direction 8. Let your prayers be followed with a constant care of your ways.—Let not your praying serve you instead of repenting and reforming, but let it quicken you to your whole duty; let your entering into your closet be your ascending heavenwards; and let not your returns thence be the falling down of your souls from heaven to earth. Let your duties and ways be all of a piece: live like praying Christians. Let not the spirituality of your morning and evening sacrifice countenance or encourage you in your all-day carnality. “*Be thou in the fear of the Lord all day long.*” (Prov. xxiii. 17.)

Direction 9. Whatever income you receive from God into your own souls, be free in dispensing to others.—I mean in a way of holy discourse and conference. Dispensing and communicating is the best way to thrive. “*There is*

that scattereth, and yet increaseth ; there is that withholdeth, and it tendeth to poverty." (Prov. xi. 24.) It is true with respect to spirituals as well as to temporals,—there are none that grow more rich towards God, than those who, by bringing forth what they have received, labour to make others rich also. Give the holy fire within you a vent, and it will burn the clearer. Keep not your religion to yourselves ; let your full cup run over ; let your lips drop as the honey-comb ; let your mouth be a well of life, and your lips feed many. (Prov. x. 11.) Build up one another in the most holy faith ; provoke one another to love and to good works ; let your families, your wives and children, your neighbours and acquaintance, have light from your candle, and be warmed by your fire. Doubtless it is one special part of God's quarrel with Christians, that there are so very many of them, of such carnal and unsavoury converse. Is it thy case ? Hast thou this to charge upon thyself ? O, amend, amend ! and see that thou continue not such a barren soul. As low as it is with thee in grace, think not to rise high, unless thou wilt make better use of what thou hast.

II. *Particular Directions.*

Direction 1. Consider what it is whereto you have already attained, and be thankful ; and be encouraged to press on, and hope for more.—Hast thou obtained grace from the Lord ? And hath he caused his grace to abound towards thee, and in thee ? And hast thou a witness within thee that thou hast not received the grace of God in vain ? But dost thou study to walk worthy of that grace wherein thou standest ? O rejoice in the Lord, and let all within thee bless his holy name ; and take what thou hast thus received as an earnest of more. Set thy foot upon the neck of every mortified lust ; take the more heart to thee to go on in the fight, and rejoice in hope of a total and final victory. The soldier, when one wing of his enemy's army is routed, or they do but give ground, and begin to fall, this raises his courage, and he falls more smartly on. Go thou and do likewise. And let thy beginning, much more thy growth in grace, and thy experience hereof, be the oiling of thy

wheels, for thy more vigorous following on after a greater increase.

Direction 2. Consider what your special corruptions, infirmities, wants, neglects, temptations, or your most ordinary failings, are.—(1.) What your special corruptions are, how far forth you have conquered them, and where you stick. In some professors, pride; in others, covetousness; in others, sensuality; in others, slothfulness; in others, peevishness, or frowardness, or the like; may have gotten such head in them, that these weeds overtop, and even choke up, all their flowers.—(2.) What your special wants or weaknesses are in point of grace; what graces they are,—whether faith, or love, or peacefulness, or meekness, or humility, or patience, &c., wherein you are most deficient or weak.—(3.) What duties they are, as either prayer, meditation, communing with your own hearts, &c., which you are most apt to neglect, or find most difficult to go comfortably through.—(4.) What temptations they are, by which you are most commonly assaulted and foiled.—(5.) What your most ordinary falls are in point of practice. And here let professors of religion be warned to consider, if they be not overtaken, (besides many others,) by some of these three evils. (i.) An over-eager and greedy following after the world. The zeal of some men's spirits after riches, hath eaten up all their zeal for God. O, into what poverty hath thy soul fallen, whilst thou hast been so busy in the world, and hast felt the prosperities thereof come crowding upon thee! Some rich professors may remember the days of old, and be troubled. This thought, When I was but a little one in this world, then was it better with me than now; this thought may be an arrow in their hearts, and kill the joy, and let out the juice and sweetness, of their greatest abundance. I remember the kindness of my youth, and the love of mine espousals; but O, where am I now? My very rising hath given me the fall. (ii.) A liberty for carnal jollity, a jovial and vainly merry life.—Such there are, who have left off to walk mournfully before the Lord of Hosts, and have given themselves to live merrily with the world; who have given over to weep with them that weep, and are fallen in to laugh with them that

laugh; to jest and sport, and be vain with the vain ones; yea, and it may be to drink and to sit down with those that drink. It is now grown too creditable to frequent drinking-houses: tradesmen that are professors, especially in cities or great towns, how ordinarily do they, upon pretence of despatch of business, sit many hours over a dish of coffee, or a cup of ale, or a glass of sack; and carry it so, that they can hardly be distinguished from the good fellows of the world, but perhaps by this only, that they are not downright drunken into beasts. If there be a liberty of such houses, and meetings in them sometimes necessary, (as perhaps it may,) let not this liberty be used as an occasion to the flesh. (iii.) Gaudiness or over-costliness in apparel; wherein some of them glitter and shine amongst the greatest gallants of the earth. Some amongst professors do not only shun, but disdain and despise the old self-denial that was wont to be among Christians in these and the like particulars; as if they were set at liberty by the Gospel from the laws of Christ, as well as from the law of Moses. To these three let me add one evil more:—(iv.) A neglect of your families,—of the instructing, catechising, and due disciplining of them; the consequences of which neglect are very sadly to be seen, in the ignorance, errors, rudeness, and disorderliness abounding amongst many of them. There are not a few who take some care of themselves, but leave the bridle on the necks of theirs; and reap many heart-breaking crops in them, as the fruits of their own negligence. O let holy Joshua's resolution be yours: "*As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*" (Josh. xxiv. 15.)

Now diligently search and consider thyself in all these things; and when thou hast faithfully studied thyself and thy ways, and hast found what it is that thou art most peccant or wanting in, and most prejudiced and hindered by; then conclude, here my great difficulty lies, and therefore here my great work lies, if ever I would prosper,—to get this or that corruption mortified, this or that grace strengthened, such and such temptations shunned or provided against, and such and such faults amended. Now I have found what hinders me; and that which doth hinder, will hinder, till it be taken out of the way.

Direction 3. Bend the main force of all your religion upon those very points wherein you are most failing or faulty.—The devil will allow us to be busy in other matters of religion, so he can but keep us off from those things where our great stress lies. The deceitful heart will take up with that which is most easy and pleasant, that thereby it may the better shift itself of that which is more hard, and would go to the quick with it. We never purge or bleed to purpose, till we hit upon the right humour, and strike the right vein.

This is to act rationally, and in judgment; to bend our great strength there, where our great difficulty or weakness lies. When you have by searching found out what you mostly stick at, let it be your first grand errand in every prayer, whether ordinary or extraordinary, to beg special help in this particular case. Your weakness, in any particular grace or duty, the power of any particular lust, corruption, or temptation, your most ordinary and common falls in point of conversation,—let these have a special place in every prayer you make. And also let them be most heedfully watched and laboured against in your lives. Turn, in the strength of prayer and watchfulness, upon the strength of sin; let your main batteries be against the strong-holds; and where your walls are weakened, there set the strongest guard and watch.

Direction 4. Measure your proficiency in religion, by the power you get in those particulars wherein you have been most deficient or faulty.—Judge not yourselves by those things which are most easy in religion, but by coming off in your most difficult case.

Some professors may at times seem to be full of good affections, strangely elevated and enlarged in their prayers; yea, and to live in so great peace, as to imagine they have attained to the riches of full assurance; and yet for all this may be but very poor Christians all the while. Let them be asked, How is it with your soul? O, I bless the Lord, I find it very comfortable! I have constant communion with God in prayer, and I live in the sweet and refreshing light of his countenance: he washeth my steps with butter, and his sun shineth upon my paths. I thank the Lord I go

comfortably on. But stay, man! How is it with thine old corruptions? Thou wast once intolerably proud, or froward, or earthly, a gay and vainly merry soul. What ground hast thou obtained of those very corruptions under which thou didst most groan? How is it with thee with respect to temptation? Dost thou fear and fly from temptation, and do what thou canst to keep thyself out of harm's way? And when thou fallest into temptation, when thou art actually tempted to pride or covetousness, when thou art provoked to passion or impatience, how goes it with thee then? How standest thou in the day of temptation? How is it with thee in regard of thy wonted evils in thy conversation? Hast thou sounded a retreat from thy eager chase after the great things of the world? Thou hast been a zealot for increasing thine earthly substance: art thou now become more moderate? Thou wast once a slothful, lazy soul in matters pertaining to God: art thou now more diligent and industrious? Art thou fervent in spirit, serving the Lord? Thou once livedst a foolish, frothy, and merry life: dost thou now carry it with more seriousness? Hast thou left thy lying and deceitful dealing? Thou hast been a self-seeker, and a flesh-pleaser: but canst thou say, Through the grace of God, I have now betaken myself to a self-denying life; and dost thou deny thyself in those very things wherein thou didst most enjoy thyself? Put thyself upon a close and severe trial here; and know that if the strong-hold be not battered and broken, if thine old lusts do still hold their power in thee, if the old sore be still issuing out, the old stream be still running its course; if thou canst not say, I have kept me from iniquity, or at least am fighting more resolutely against it; if thou still stickest where thou wast wont to stick, whatsoever flush thou seemest to have of good affections, whatsoever confidence thou hast of thy good condition, it is a sure sign it is not so well with thee. Look to what degree of success thou hast attained in those things wherein thy great difficulty lay: to such a degree of soul-prosperity thou hast attained, and no more.

Direction 5. Measure your hopes of the answer of your prayers for the public, by your experience of their speeding in your own particular case.—If thy sin can stand before

all thy prayers, thy enemies, fears, and dangers, are not like to fall ever the sooner for such praying: what God may do upon the prayers of others, thou knowest not; but nothing is like to go the better for thee. If thou hast run with the footmen, (within thee,) and these have been too hard for thee, how wilt thou contend with them that ride upon horses? If thou canst not stop the muddy streams of thine own cistern, how wilt thou stand before the swelling of Jordan? If thy prayers prevail so little to the setting thine own heart, or thine own house, in order, how canst thou think they will do anything against the hosts of the uncircumcised? "*God heareth not sinners;*" (John ix. 31;) not only such sinners as are in a state of sin, and totally alienated from the life of God, but even such also, who, though they have been once washed in the blood of Christ, are again fallen into, and wallowing in, the mud and mire of any one allowed evil: they are all like to be but miserable comforters in the day of distress. Remember that scripture mentioned before, "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*" (Psalm lxvi. 18.)

But, on the other side, if thou dost obtain, if thou dost prevail, in thine own personal case, this hath good hope in it: it is an argument that thy prayers are accepted with God. And if the Lord accept thee when thou prayest for thyself, or for thine house, thence the greater hope will spring that he will accept thee when thou prayest for his own house and people. And if he doth accept thee for them, he will either deliver them out of their distress, and thou shalt have the honour to be one of those for whose sake deliverance comes; or, if, he should not grant thy request as to the public, yet he will not fail to give thee thine own soul for a prey, though he do not give thee the lives of them that sail with thee in the ship.

And now you see the best way that is open to you, to help at a pinch, to save the poor distressed churches of God in this time of their need,—such praying as may have its fruit unto holiness in yourselves. By this you may do much to promote the holiness and happiness of the people: if anything, this will do it.

Wherefore gird up your loins, and set in good earnest

upon this seasonable and mighty duty. Go into your closets, lift up your hearts, draw forth your souls, pour out your tears, weep in your prayer, weep over your own and the people's sins and fears, and bow yourselves with your might before the Lord : this once, try what you can do, try the strength of prayer. Pray all to rights within you, and at home ; and then seek, and cry, and wrestle, and trust, and wait for the salvation of God to be revealed in due time upon his people.

Let us at length hear the conclusion of the whole matter, What shall be the fruit of all this? What will you now do? If I should only ask, Who among you will join in, and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, the church of the living God? every one would readily answer, I will for one, I for another ; God forbid I should hold my peace. "*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee : peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sake I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.*" (Psalm cxxii. 6—9.)

If it be asked further, And who will pray for the destruction of Babylon? O, every one of us that has a heart for the peace of Jerusalem! Down with it, down with it, even to the ground! "*Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom, in the day of Jerusalem, who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.*" (Psalm cxxxvii. 7, 8.)

But would you that your prayers should be heard? Then arise out of your places, and fall every man upon a personal reformation. Down with your sin, and out with the world ; lift up Christ in your hearts, if you would have Antichrist fall in the earth ; let Christ have a name within you above every name, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity,—from his own iniquity ; seek not for corn, and for wine, or for freedom to sit down every man under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, where none shall make them afraid ; but seek the Lord, that the Lord God may dwell among you,—may delight in you and be exalted by you, that you may indeed

become the people of his holiness, and the people of his prayer. Seek to be made partakers of his holiness, and follow after holiness, and so follow after that ye may obtain. Let there be such a heart in you, and such a holy design heartily taken up, and zealously pursued by you; and the Lord will certainly accept you, and answer your prayers, and your profane enemies will then learn to take heed how they again mock or boast themselves against the prayers of the saints. It was reported of a great churchman, that when several ministers were turned out of their places for non-conformity, he said in disdain, "We'll turn them out, and let them see if they can pray them in again." Once lift up holy hands to the Lord, and God will give such an answer, that they will take heed of boasting again against prayer. If yet they should take unto them the hardness to say, Where is your God? doubt not but in a little time you shall have this song put into your mouths, —"*Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*" (Isa. xxv. 9.)

But if it must suffice you to pray, and you will still go on to traverse your old ways, suffering your sins and the world to hold the head of you, let not such men think they shall receive anything of the Lord.

Wherefore once again be exhorted to come to a point in this matter, and determine what ye will do. If ye will not heartily follow this necessary design of advancing in holiness, you may stand aside, and sit out from that of prayer, for any good we can expect from you: but if you are resolved on the former, and that with all imaginable seriousness, you will the more prosper in the latter; let both go together, and henceforth look for good speed in either.

Well, shall this decree immediately go forth? Say the word at once, but let it be with an unalterable resolution; at least, be advised to this (which I pray forget not) from the day of your next solemn appearing before God in this duty of prayer for the public, let your decree be dated; and if needs be, let the very day be written down, and so go, and let it be heedfully prosecuted; and upon each

return of this solemn service, let it be actually and expressly renewed. "*O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee.*" (1 Chron. xxix. 18.)



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